

# Käthe Kollwitz



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## THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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## PSYCHIATRY

# The institutions of insanity

By Robert Brown

ANDREW SCULL (Editor):  
Madhouses, Mad-Doctors and Madmen  
The Social History of Psychiatry in the Victorian Era  
364pp. Athlone Press. £16.  
0 485 30302 8  
KLAUS DOERNER:  
Madmen and the Bourgeoisie  
A Social History of Insanity and Psychiatry  
361pp. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. £16.  
0 631 10181 0

In 1837 an author wrote in the *North American Review* that "no fact relating to insanity appears better established, than the general certainty of curing it in its early stage". At much the same time (1844) the proprietor of the High Beach Lunatic Asylum in England was telling a Commission of Lunacy on a Mr Thomas Campbell "that one of the symptoms of Campbell's insanity was that he objected to woolen trousers, and preferred corduroy because they were better for walking". These two quotations are drawn from the essays on Victorian psychiatry collected by Andrew Scull from some dozen British and American historians. When the two quotations are brought face to face they immediately generate the complex and somewhat disturbing question with which these writers deal: "who in Victorian psychiatry was curing what - and why?"

It is clear enough who was keeping watch on the mentally afflicted. Throughout the eighteenth century, and well into the nineteenth, it was clergymen, jailors, relatives, private mad-house proprietors, hospital attendants unwillingly or unwittingly, and the keepers of borough asylums and workhouses. Bethlehem (Bedlam) Hospital, the oldest institution in England for the custody of the mentally ill, was noted for the business enterprise of its custodians, but they did not pretend to offer either refuge, good care, or cure. That was left to such people as William Battie, one of the founders, and first physician, of St Luke's Hospital, London, which began accepting pauper madmen for treatment in 1751. Within a few years Battie was training medical students there for psychiatric work, and from that time onward medical interest in the management of the insane grew steadily. Battie's *Treatise on Madness*, perhaps the first textbook on psychiatry, appeared in 1758; sixteen years later parliament had placed the registration and inspection of private madhouses, and commitment to them, effectively under the control of the College of Physicians. This transference of the management of the mentally disturbed - shown by the intervention of the state, the increasing use of asylums, and the growing legal power of medical experts - culminated in the act of 1845 which compelled local governments to provide asylums for pauper lunatics.

All these changes, and many more, are summarized in passing by Scull in his paper on the social history of Victorian psychiatry, and by William Bynum, Jr, writing on rationales for the therapy of the period. The increasing centralization of power of treatment in the medical profession and in the asylums, public and private, is also referred to by Nancy Tomes in her account of early American construction and management of asylums. She usefully reminds us that their "advocates had to convince the public that insanity was a curable disease, best treated by a mental hospital". But given the commendable emphasis by these authors on such a striking change of social policy, it is even more striking that no writer in this volume offers any real explanation of this remarkable shift in public attitude. Why, from the mid-eighteenth century onward, did treatment of the mentally disturbed suddenly become of interest to medical practitioners? No doubt once they became interested, they had means available to them of first consolidating, and then extending, their area of concern. But what produced their concern? Histories of psychiatry may find the answer too obvious, too hard, too long, or simply not their current

business. However, it is important to the serious reader, for whom this book is intended, to learn which answer he is to be given.

In the past twenty years there has grown up a considerable literature on Victorian mental therapy as it was practised in Britain and America. One reason why the literature has become so extensive is that the disorders under discussion were of many different, and sometimes quite unrelated, kinds. While it is now stressed that the terms "insanity", "lunacy", and "madness" have a legal use rather than a medical one, a fair good part of the nineteenth century they were used as though they were the names of a specific illness concerning whose treatment honest experts could, unfortunately, disagree. In practice, the word "insane" came

weep over his little rabbits, which he had not seen for six weeks". Tuthill's diagnosis was supported by a Dr Frampton who, on December 7, thought that Davies was insane "because he would not admit himself to have been insane on the eighth of August". Under these circumstances it is not surprising that in 1845 there was founded the Alleged Lunatic's Friend Society. It had much work to do.

The question "which groups were the beneficiaries - or victims - of Victorian mental therapy?" is considered by a number of Scull's contributors. It is known that pauper women formed the largest single group: in 1871, there were 1,182 female lunatics for every 1,000 certified men, and for every 1,000 certified male paupers there were 1,242 female lunatics. Sho-

reason private asylums were more likely than public ones to be guilty of wrongful confinement. The truth of this matter is made more obscure by the almost complete lack of attention given by the Victorians to the questions whether paupers or working-class people were being wrongfully confined. Settling this matter will require considerably more evidence and argument than is given here.

Discussions of Victorian diagnosis and treatment, taken generously from the largest part of *Madhouses, Mad-Doctors and Madmen*. Bynum points out that by the early nineteenth century three views of the nature of insanity were current: that it was caused by a physical ailment; that it was caused by a mental ailment distinct from the mental symptoms produced

menaced, beaten, starved, and chained to a stake, the civilizing influence of phrenology is easy to appreciate.

When it came to the point, however, Victorian physicians had no evidence that their certified patients were suffering from brain disease or, indeed, any other bodily ailment. What they were suffering from was described by advocates of psychological therapy as derangements of the will, the passions, and the sensations. The causes were mental, they said, and therefore the treatment had, in part, to be moral. In "Moral Treatment Reconsidered" Scull asks why, for most of the eighteenth century, madmen were treated as beasts whereas at its end such benign institutions as the Quakers' York Retreat began to appear. His answer is that on the earlier view madness was thought to consist almost wholly in loss of reason - the faculty believed to be necessary for human status. When a person lost his reason he lost the essential characteristic of a human being, and thus his claim to be treated as one. Blows, whipping, purges, chains, and forced vomiting were designed to induce fear, to subjugate manie, to coerce the insane into rationality. The "rupture with the past" came, Scull thinks, with industrialization and its need for a self-disciplined work force, one which took advantage of the new economic opportunities for upward mobility by internalizing a new set of responses to work and its financial rewards and punishments. Harsh management of the insane was to be replaced by re-education which would fit them for a competitive position in the industrial market-place.

Whatever the merits of this account, it does have the advantage of laying weight, as Foucault has, on an important change in European ideas about mental disorder. One part of the change seems to have been a new conception of which abilities were actually lost in cases of serious irrationality and which capacities were retained. Another part was that it came to be realized that the distinction between rationality and irrationality, and thus between madness and sanity, was neither clear-cut nor rigid. In consequence, the requirements for being granted human status were broadened; madness upon one subject was no longer taken to be a sign of utter mental disintegration. This, in turn affected the standards of treatment both for animals and people; if people could be partly mad and still be human, then they could not be wholly treated as beasts.

Scull thinks that the eighteenth-century belief in the complete continuity between all forms of animal life - the Great Chain of Being - helped to support the earlier and harsher view of insanity, for the belief in continuity allowed mental disorder to be blamed on the animal features of its victims. But this conclusion fits poorly with Scull's own emphasis on the eighteenth-century adherence to the notion of there being a rigid distinction between madness and sanity. It is more plausible to suggest that belief in the continuous gradation of animal life encouraged the notion that human rationality was also a matter of degree. However, neither this view nor Scull's can explain why the Great Chain of Being, a very old idea, should suddenly, at the end of the eighteenth century, and almost at the end of its own life, be thought to apply to human powers of rationality.

In the end, Victorian psychiatric theory was paralyzed by asking the wrong questions, and Victorian public therapy was swamped by the flood of pauper patients who were channelled into the asylums by beneficent legislation. These twin processes are well documented here. Since "certifiable lunacy" was not the name of a specific ailment of mental ailments, it could not be investigated either medically or psychologically, it required sociological investigation. Because scientific knowledge about mental disorder was lacking, moral assessment was the common substitute. Michael Clark, in his paper on the rejection by British psychiatrists of psychological methods, refers pointedly to the "dangerous



Three illustrations from Andrew Scull's book. Two are engravings from Jean Etienne Dominique Esquirol's *Des Maladies Mentales* (Paris, 1838); above, left, a Swiss soldier aged twenty-seven, admitted to the Charenton in 1827, who, following a dispute with officers and his demotion, became first wildly delirious and then fell into a state of withdrawal and catatonia. Top right: A woman, her late husband's patient at the Salpêtrière in 1813. Bottom: The Philadelphia Medical Museum (1811) and shows the chair invented by Benjamin Rush for the Pennsylvania Hospital which 'binds and confines every part of the body'. Rush comments, 'In 24, 12, 6, and in some cases in 4 hours, the most refractory patients have been composed. I have called it a Tranquillizer.'

water's essay, from which these figures are taken, goes on to note that female inmates lived longer than male inmates, and also remained longer. In English public asylums and hospitals. Since there were more pauper women in England than pauper men, and since there is apparently some evidence that paupers in general were more readily certified than members of the paying class, Showalter concludes that the public asylums helped to create their own majority populations of female incurables.

The point which remains at issue is whether the standards for certifying paupers were actually lower than those for certifying middle-class people. Showalter simply refers to "a wide range of contemporary observers" who said so. But McCandless quotes both *The Times* and a Select Committee on Lunacy as arguing, in mid-century, that it was in the interest of public asylums "to release patients at the earliest opportunity so as to relieve the ratepayers of a financial burden". On the other hand, private asylums were operated for profit. It was in their owners' financial interest to keep their institutions well filled, and for that

by a physical disease; that it was "caused by either physical disease or mental aberrations". Most British doctors naturally favoured the first view, and Rogers Cooter, in his persuasive paper on the historical importance of phrenology in the development of psychiatric theory, indicates why phrenology became so popular with the medical profession in the period 1825-45. Phrenology's founder, F. J. Gall, claimed that insanity was a physical disease of the brain but that the disorder could be either structural or functional. This seemed to explain why post-mortems did not always reveal organic lesions in the brains of certified patients. Moreover, by correlating each sort of psychological disturbance with a particular area (an organ) of the brain, phrenologists could give a pseudo-explanation of a somewhat kind for every mental disorder. Treatment consisted in strengthening certain useful organs of the brain by benevolent care so as to suppress the troublesome ones. One of the happier effects of the theory was that it offered a scientific justification of a humane regimen, when we recall that as a mental patient even George III was immobilized,



moral irresponsibility" and "moral depravity" which those physicians ascribed to the mentally ill. It was only natural, therefore, that many therapists, as McCandless notes, "seemed to be constantly trying to enlarge the boundaries of insanity" so as to equate it with unconventional behaviour - behaviour which was to be corrected, in part, by homiletic techniques.

The tone of didactic moralizing in Victorian physicians was rather fierce. In discussing the Victorian boundary between criminal responsibility and insanity, Roger Smith quotes a remark made by a Dr Winslow about a woman who confessed both to adultery and to the murder of her sin children but successfully pleaded insanity: "If she were insane, her mental derangement was the result of the immoral life she had led for years, and as her insanity was self-created, the gollows ought to have claimed her for its victim". The need for self-control, and hence the need to be responsible for one's own mental state, were deeply ingrained in Victorian morality. The doctors' compulsion to blame the patients for falling ill - for succumbing to sin - largely accounts for the psychiatrists' interest both in reforming their clients' characters and in urging them to repent.

This highly informative and sobering book makes it obvious that most Victorian misanthropes of the mentally disturbed were due to false beliefs about the nature of mental disorder and to a willingness to treat its victims as non-human. This certainly demonstrates the general importance of our having true beliefs; but it also raises questions which the volume's contributors deal with only in passing: Why do so many Victorian psychiatrists now seem to us crazier than their patients? Did dealing in such ignorance with lunatics drive the doctors mad? Had they no responsibility at all for their false beliefs?

Klaus Doerner's *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie*, first published in Germany in 1969, bears the intellectual scars of its period. More ambitious in scope than the volume edited by Scull, this book summarizes, and meditates on, the history of British, French, and German psychiatry from the early eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. Lurking in the wings of this discussion is a shadowy argument which periodically comes on stage for a brief bow to the author's applause: it is that the rise of psychiatric medicine in the years 1750-85 was somehow connected with the onset of the Industrial Revolution, the rise of free contractual labour, and the increased social visibility of the poor, the mad, and those who were both. The connection, Doerner seems to be saying, is that with the arrival of industrialization, the insane were regarded as economically, and hence socially, useless. Their rational and unpredictable behaviour was seen as disruptive of the efficiency of a modern bourgeoisie state, yet their labour, like that of other social outcasts, was badly needed for the expansion of industrial production and for use in the colonial armed forces. The state tried to integrate these outcasts into the economy by creating special institutions in which psychiatric medicine would be used to reform the deviants and protect the public. This particular combination of social coercion and social welfare was one way, Doerner thinks, in which the bourgeoisie state successfully extended its claims to have legitimate public authority.

If this, in outline, is Doerner's argument - and the talking-computer nature of his translation undermines any confidence in this matter - then there is little in his book to persuade us that his argument, which is also that of Foucault, is correct. No evidence is given that the pauper lunatics became more socially visible with the economy at the end of the eighteenth century, although the claim is made repeatedly. Nor is any reason given why of this time the insane should have been thought to be more economically useless and objectionable than previously. If we had grounds for thinking this proposition to be true, it would be easy to invent some reasons in its favour. But Doerner's playful attitude toward his own claims makes this unnecessary. Why, to take another example, should we believe that the bourgeoisie state needed "the labour of pauper lunatics"? True, the number under public care depended entirely on social policy; but the nineteenth-century commitment of an increasingly large number of people to asylums at

public expense was more a matter of putting them into live storage than it was of integrating them into factories and armies. Elsewhere Doerner refers to the more familiar suggestion "that after the transition from the agrarian extended family to the bourgeois small family, the latter could not possibly take care of an insane (retarded, ill, old) member, and therefore special institutions proliferated". He does not reject this suggestion, but acceptance of it would drastically alter his labour-theory of institutionalization.

For an English-speaking audience, Doerner's account of the early history of German psychiatry makes available a considerable amount of unfamiliar, and sometimes bizarre, speculations on madness and its therapy. Out of the hedge-podge of somatic medicine, proto-psychiatry, idealist philosophy, and Christian theology which constituted psychiatric thought in nineteenth-century Germany, emerge figures such as Hoyer, the humanitarian reformer, who nevertheless devised a hollow running-wheel in which the patient could bring himself back to his senses and the real world by physical exhaustion. Doerner, rather characteristically, takes this invention to be "renewed proof that identity, the dominant theme of the time, was not merely an epistemological problem but increasingly motivated by the bourgeois quest for social identity". What he means, apparently, is that Hoyer's wheel is an example of the psychiatric reformers' attempt to give insane people a "social identity" and to bring them under the discipline of an industrializing state. If the use of the wheel will serve to support this conclusion, then so will the use of public mockery, purges, beatings, and all other forms of therapeutic terror. But what distinguishes these pre-industrial techniques from that of Hoyer? How do we know whether any of them was being used to bring its victims "under the discipline of an industrializing state"? Could we have asked the therapist whether he had that in mind?

Doerner's account does bring out the constant association in German therapy, as in that of Victorian England and America, between psychiatric treatment and moral re-education. At various places he makes the Marxist point that because large sections of the educated German bourgeoisie were excluded from economic and political power, the combination of political impotence and an uncompromising moral code led them to internalize their powerlessness as a sense of personal inadequacy for which they held themselves to be individually responsible. When this guilt-laden attitude expressed itself in treatment of the mentally disturbed, Doerner says, it authorized every coercive means so that morality could "emerge victorious and break through all external barriers and resistance and their internal corollaries, the passions". There is an interesting conjecture here which is struggling to survive. But like so much else in Doerner's study, it is left to make its own way.

Meanwhile the author, or at least his translator, presses on to new conclusions with the old of dangerously strengthened metaphors. "One of the consequences," we discover, "of putting idealism on its feet" apart from its liberating aspect, was the failure of the natural-scientific and social-scientific 'feet' to find a common rhythm within the medium of the liberal division of labour, and to this day they tend to march to their own drummer."

In *Boundary and Space - An Introduction to the work of D. W. Winnicott* (1966, London: H. Karnak (Books) Ltd. £9.00 9507746 7 4) the two authors, Madeleine Davis and David Wallbridge, drawing on both published and unpublished material, present the main themes of Winnicott's theory of personal development and show how he contributed to an understanding of the significance of infancy in the whole life of human beings. In addition, they reveal how personal and professional influences affected his own development as paediatrician, child analyst, teacher and theorist. The book is divided under three main headings: The Background, The Theory of Emotional Development, and Boundary and Space; and a list of sources can be found in the reference section at the end.



A photographer for many years before establishing his reputation as a painter, Robert Rauschenberg has recently once more interested himself in the medium. Robert Rauschenberg Photographs (about 140 unnumbered pages, Thames and Hudson, £12.95, 0 500 54075 6) contains examples from both periods, including that reproduced above, taken in Boston, Massachusetts, during 1979-80.

## Domestic diagnostics

By Peter Sedgwick

DAVID LOCKER (Editor):  
Symptoms and Illness  
The Cognitive Organisation of Disorder  
193pp, Tavistock, £12.  
0 422 77460

During a year's investigation spanning parts of 1974 and 1975, David Locker conducted and recorded a series of interviews on personal health matters with six women who had been asked to keep "health diaries" about the symptoms and remedies characteristic of them and their families during the course of the study. Apart from some rather compressed theoretical observations (owing much to the ethnomethodological tradition of sociological enquiry) which are placed at the beginning and the end of the book, *Symptoms and Illness* consists of Dr Locker's commentaries upon a large number of verbatim extracts from these women's accounts of how they recognized and dealt with illness in themselves and the other members of their households.

Put this simply, the exercise might seem just one more feat of low-level observation in the spirit of modest empiricism that has infused much social research in Britain. But what makes *Symptoms and Illness* an interesting work is the dense elaboration of the various explanatory and therapeutic strategies offered by the respondents and picked up in Locker's very full glosses on the transcripts. There may be some doubt as to how representative of the generality of British wives and mothers this small sample is; Locker is curiously silent on the fact that all the main breadwinners in these homes come from the professional and managerial classes. But the types of competence in managing both family illnesses and medical agencies that are discussed at length here are likely to be quite widely dispersed in modern households. Consumers of our contemporary health-services operate with a good deal of lay knowledge about the expected course of illness and the extent to which it is proper at any given point in an illness to hand the problem over to a professional outside the home. While such lay knowledge is rather unsystematized and pragmatic, it is also (from the evidence of Locker's respondents) extensive and complex, covering psychiatric and physical disorders, the complaints of childhood and the limitations of advancing years.

Locker is thus able to list seven different types of causal explanation which are provided in these accounts

of family or personal health-problems. We have, from these relatively uneducated respondents who must have picked up their aetiological knowledge from advice-columns in the popular press or else from other lay practitioners of health-care, a great wealth of causal agents ranging from the environmental (eg a change in the wind as a precipitant of hay-fever) to the biochemical (a germ or virus), and from the familial (whether inherited or experienced) to the stage of the sufferer's life (menopause, adolescence). In the case of "stage of life" explanations, it seems that these function much of the time as filters in the patient's or relative's decision not to call in the doctor. Illnesses which are attributable simply to the putative patient's age-status tend to get re-defined as being not quite illnesses after all, at least if he or she is on the elderly side. (Conversely, if the sufferer is a young child, symptoms may be accorded the priority of a special urgency, and the fact of the patient's tender years may be mentioned to the GP's receptionist to ensure that the news of the complaint will be taken seriously by her employer.)

What Locker calls the "interpretive" work of his respondents appears to play a very considerable part in the sequence of actions and reactions which lead to a medical referral. The thermometer is only one element, and perhaps a dispensable one, in the modern household's multifarious apparatus of lay diagnosis, which consists in the main of talk and observation conducted on the candidate-patient's own premises, as well as of a whole mass of theories about illnesses and their causes which are current among the ordinary public. For Locker it is not simply the world of mental illness which is the subject of a thorough social constitution (as the case of the anti-psychiatrists and "labelling" theorists would have us believe), but illness in general, be it mental, physical or mixed in character. In line with the more sustained theoretical arguments offered by Robert Dingwall in his searching monograph *Aspects of Illness* (published in 1976), the present text encourages us to see illness as an everyday social construction, to be understood by reference to human meanings rather than to impersonal causes favoured by many professional diagnosticians and therapists.

It is a pity that, having exposed the fallacy of the appeal to a biological level of symptom-description which supposedly operates as a source of "raw" data about the patient innocent of any "interpretive" ordering, Locker still finds room for a distinction between "illnesses"

(which are socially constituted) and "diseases" (which are a basic biological entity preceding the social constitution into illness). He claims that "what is labelled disease has an existence independent of interpretive activity, while illness does not". This sharp differentiation between the biological or organic datum of disease and the social, value-laden construct of illness is not an unfamiliar logic of pathology. It is argued by, for example, David Morgan, the sociologist who supervised the dissection on which *Symptoms and Illness* is based, and has become common in recent American theorizing on the nature of illness. The trouble is that "disease" does have a well-founded and distinctive popular use, or set of uses, which overlaps with the connotation of "illness". At least if he or she is on the elderly side. (Conversely, if the sufferer is a young child, symptoms may be accorded the priority of a special urgency, and the fact of the patient's tender years may be mentioned to the GP's receptionist to ensure that the news of the complaint will be taken seriously by her employer.)

The most disturbing feature of the accounts of ill-health given by Locker's ladies is the degree to which they are permeated by this technological, disease-ridden vision of sickness, at the expense of any more positive ideas on how they and their families might keep fit and well. What *Symptoms and Illness* blandly calls the "competence" of its witnesses for a patient's symptoms, indeed, is the arrangement of their illness as the arrangement of their lives: a process seems rather to reflect a certain fatalism, when it comes to minimizing the chances of falling ill in the first place.

Despite Locker's occasional paeans to the "commonsense understanding" which fortifies the labour of these anxious Penelopes at the opening lull of domestic diagnosis and remedy, *Symptoms and Illness* is a useful work which will deserve a place to the basic reading material for the training doctor, psychologist or social worker. But in the absence of health education in schools and colleges, and with the contrary prevalence of illness-inducing practices fostered by advertising and life-style, common sense is likely to encourage as much misinterpretation of health-problems as interpretation, and thus to rank highly among the social factors contributing to mortality as well as morbidity.

## OPERA

## Sounds and settings

By Anthony Burgess

EUGENIO MONTALE:  
Prime alla Scala  
522pp, Milan: Mondadori, L20,000.

It is not necessary for a poet to know about music, but it helps. If Swinburne had not been tone-deaf, he might have realized that it was not within his province to contrive pure patterns of euphony: there was another art that could quite satisfactorily exploit the allure of sound. Johnson, who got on well enough without a liking for music, encouraged his literary successors to regard it as either noise or angels, but certainly incapable of discoursing sense.

The tide turned with Browning. The two great literary productions of 1922, the seminal works of our century (both of which, it may be argued, owe something to Browning), rely heavily on music. There is as much Wagner as Shakespeare in *The Waste Land*, and *Ulysses* showed that the sentence could be an analogue of the musical phrase, the fugue could be imitated, and that the total structure of a novel could learn from sonata form.

James Joyce was a tenor and, had he not been diverted by literature, he might have been a great one. Eugenio Montale was gifted with a fine baritone voice, and he might have attained professional status with it if his singing master,

Ernesto Sivori, had not died untimely. He remained a musician and, between 1954 and 1967, contributed regular very well-informed articles on opera to the *Corriere d'Informazione*. There are certain ignoramus who assume that to be Italian is to be musical anyway. To these it must be said that there is no such thing as an Italian. There are, for instance, Neapolitans, who assume, as black drummers with rhythm, that they are naturally endowed with the singing gift, and there are Romans, who make no such claim. Italy is probably less musical than England, and audiences at La Scala, Milan, are regrettably limited in their operatic tastes. If opera, which does not include Wagnerian music drama, is the national art, it is because southern

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## Measuring the masterpieces

By Michael Tanner

PATRICIA HOWARD (Editor):  
C. W. von Gluck *Orfeo*  
143pp,  
0 521 22827 1

JULIAN RUSHTON (Editor):  
W. A. Mozart *Don Giovanni*  
165pp,  
0 521 29663 3

LUCY BECKETT (Editor):  
Richard Wagner *Parsifal*  
163pp  
0 521 29662 5  
Cambridge University Press. £9.95 (paperback £3.95) each.

Opera is one of the supreme cultural achievements of the post-Renaissance Western world. Notoriously it is an unstable art-form, with several elements in potential conflict, so that its capacity for reaching supreme artistic heights is constantly being thwarted by the struggle to overcome the limitations of the operatic medium. Notoriously it is an unstable art-form, with several elements in potential conflict, so that its capacity for reaching supreme artistic heights is constantly being thwarted by the struggle to overcome the limitations of the operatic medium. Notoriously it is an unstable art-form, with several elements in potential conflict, so that its capacity for reaching supreme artistic heights is constantly being thwarted by the struggle to overcome the limitations of the operatic medium.

The actual situation is, alas, catastrophically disappointing: if one wants to increase one's understanding, and therefore one's love of the greatest works in the genre, one looks very largely in vain. There is an enormous amount written about opera, but it nearly always seems to avoid discussion of the crucial questions. One finds endlessly repeated plot-summaries, accounts of opening-night fiascos followed by triumph, histories of various styles of performance, statistics of success, biographies of singers, speculations about voices which can never be verified - everything except a concentration on why opera, and particular operas, matter. The warmest welcome should therefore be extended to the series of handbooks which has just been inaugurated by the Cambridge University Press. The aim of these books, in the compilation of which the individual authors have been given considerable latitude, is to provide a history of the specific work and its genesis; a detailed account of the plot; a musical analysis of the work or of crucial parts of it; an account of the interpretations. It has been given by critics, together with the author's or compiler's own view, if he or she has one; and a bibliography and discography.

Of the first three books in the series one is as almost total failure, relative to the aims just listed: one is a rag-bag which includes good moments; and one is a brilliant and highly original contribution to the subject.

The failure is the book compiled by Patricia Howard on Gluck's *Orfeo*. The most interesting question it raises is whether there ought to be a book devoted to every important and even

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### THE GROTESQUE IN ART AND LITERATURE

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# Journeys out of Separateness

By Jennifer Uglow

EUDORA WELTY:  
Collected Stories  
622pp. Marion Boyars. £15.  
0 7145 2728 9

In the *New Yorker* in 1965 Eudora Welty defended "Where Is the Voice Coming From?", an exploration of bigotry in the form of a monologue delivered by the murderer of a civil rights leader, with the words "There is absolutely everything in fiction but a clear answer." Her assertion sums up the cumulative impression left by this splendid collected edition of her stories. They demonstrate such versatility that labels such as "Southern Gothic", "feminine", or "symbolist" seem partial and inadequate. Yet they all share a sense of strangeness, an enigmatic quality which stems both from the author's respect for the secret lives of individuals and from her concern with metaphysical mysteries – the question of where man can look for meaning in the arbitrary and uncaring processes of nature and time.

The edition contains four complete collections, plus two later stories inspired by the turmoil of the 1960s. The arrangement of the original volumes is unchanged – wisely, since each collection has its own shape and coherence. *A Certain Green* (1941) contains several stories of the Depression, but is often bitterly funny, with a gallery of characters whose outer grotesqueries won't let Welty her reputation as a Gothic writer. In *The Wide Net* (1943) the odd individuals remain, but the aardonic resignation gives way to a more romantic exploration of human loneliness and longing. *The Golden Apples* (1949), a cycle of stories with an extraordinary structural and symbolic unity, spanning forty years in a small town, pursues the oppositions of community and individual fulfillment, and the agency that accompanies visionary openness to life. Finally, *The Bride of the Innisfallen* (1955), dedicated to Elizabeth Bowen, suggests that the acceptance of loneliness can be a condition of the strength required for clear perception and for entry into the world, "the lovely room full of strangers".

Between those collections she also wrote three novels, *The Robber Bridegroom*, *Delta Wedding*, and

*The Ponder Heart*, and she has since written three more, *Losing Battles*, *One Time*, *One Place* and *Opinions*. These, like her stories, are especially remarkable for their depiction of determined women, whose fate rarely corresponds to the stereotypes of female destiny. Yet although highly respected and critically acclaimed, her work has never won the popular readership it deserves. Her writing is immediate and direct; she pins down idiomatic speech with hilarious accuracy, and locates her stories with precise detail in time and place. But the detail itself also provides dense patterns of imagery, and there is perhaps something disconcerting in the way her realism suddenly becomes surreal, just as reality and fantasy continually blur in the minds of her characters.

The creature pillows smelled like wet stones... The curtains hung almost still, like poured cream, down the windows, but on the table the petals shattered all at once from a bowl of roses.

A hallucinatory vividness colours her picture of the South, which is often presented as a region of dreamers, floating in backwater time. As Dicey, the Yankee cousin in "Kin" says, "everybody I knew there lived as if they had never heard of anywhere else, even Jackson." The life and landscape of Mississippi – the hill farms, the sleepy towns, the expanse of the Delta, the luxuriance of the swamp, the old frontier road of the Natchez Trace – provide the subjects of nearly all the stories. Welty clearly understands the city exile's "Longing for that careless, patched land of Mississippi winter, trees in their rusty wrappers, alonggrown trees taking their time, the lost shambles of old cane, the winter swamp where his own twin brother, he supposed, still hunted." It is, of course, Welty's own country. Born in Jackson in 1909, she has lived there all her life, except for periods of study in Columbus Ohio, at the University of Wisconsin, a course in advertising at Columbia University, New York, and, later, trips to Europe. But, as she and her commentators have often pointed out, she has a measure of detachment, allowing her to escape the burden of guilt and regret for Southern history, since her father came from Ohio, and her mother from West Virginia. And although her early supporters included writers such as Cleanth Brooks, Robert

Perhaps he had even decided that it was a symbol not of happiness with Ellie, but of something else – something which he could have alone, for only himself, in peace, something strange and unlooked for which would come to him...

Much of the elusiveness of the

stories comes from the way Welty allows her characters to retain an inner life, hidden even from the omniscient author. Again this can involve the narrative structure itself. When events are described in the first person ("Why I live at the P.O.", "The Golden Shower", "Where Is the Voice Coming From?") or from the viewpoint of an individual or closely-knit group ("The Petrified Man", "Keela", "The Outcast Indian Maiden", "At the Landing", "The Whole World Knows"), the account may be so coloured by confusion, prejudice, ignorance or emotion that the reader is hard put to find a perspective from which to interpret them or to make moral judgments. Elsewhere the point of consciousness in the story may be a traveller who is in only partial possession of the facts ("The Hitch Hiker" or people wholly deprived of communication, such as deaf-mutes ("The Key", "First Love"), the inarticulate ("A Worn Path", "The Burning") or the insane ("Clytie").

The effect is to emphasize an alienation which the characters continually strive to overcome. They long, as the young girl Nina does in "Moon Lake", to merge the self with that of another, "To slip into them all – to change. To change for a moment into Gertrude, into Miss Gruenwald, into Twosie – into a boy. To have been an orphan." But the possibility of such union is not a real one. The most explicit statement of this preoccupation comes in the story "A Still Moment", in which the evangelist Lorenzo Dow reflects on his horror at Audubon's shooting of a white heron so that he may study its beauty:

He could understand God's giving Separateness first and then giving Love to follow and heal its wonder; but God had reversed this, and given Love first and then Separateness, as though it did not matter to Him which came first. Perhaps it was that God never counted the moments of Time; Lorenzo did, that, among his tasks of love, Time did not occur to God. Therefore – did he even know of it? How to explain Time and Separateness back to God, who had never thought of them, who could let the whole world come to grief in a scattering moment?

People adopt different defences against this existential loneliness, and against the ravages of chance, whether mis-used good fortune ("Flowers for Marjorie") or the accidental death of a beloved ("A Curtain of Green"). Some immerse

themselves in daily life, and in the social rituals which figure repeatedly in these stories – concerts, parties, funerals. The numerous suicides belie their apparent success. Others become passive victims, finding comfort in total surrender. Still others try to impose order, through love, through art, through an intense ecstatic moment of vision, or through the "wild reality" of fantasy and dream.

In the volume *The Golden Apples* the forces of love, sexuality, dream and art pull constantly against the small but remorseless demands of small-town life. We encounter a series of artist-wanderers, who, like Orpheus, may be either god or victim, or both. Their attempts to break out of the enchanted frozen existence of their town, Morgans, are enhanced by references to classical myth: Zeus and Dione, Perseus and Medusa; to the folklore of natural fertility – "Tis the habit of Sir Rabbit, to dance in the wood"; and to archetypal symbols of submergence, death and rebirth. Above all the stories are permeated by the echoes of Celtic mythology which cluster around Yeats's minstrel, the Wandering Aengus, driven on "Because a fire was in my head" to hunt perpetually for his vision of love.

Like Virgil Rainey, the pianist whose release from the community forms the climax to the cycle, Eudora Welty can convince us that she is in tune with the rain falling not only on "the whole South" but, for all she knew, on the everywhere. Both character and author confront the terror of separateness and find solace in a tradition of the imagination which at once respects and transforms the violence of nature. "They heard through falling rain the stroke of the leopard, the dragon's trumpet of the swan." The publication of these *Collected Stories* allows us to celebrate the achievement of one of the most outstanding, evocative – and understated – of American writers.

We should like to inform readers that Gilbert Sorrentino's latest novel *Crystal Vision*, reviewed in the TLS of December 4, will be published in this country by Marion Boyars (£6.95, 0 7145 2759 9) in May. Sorrentino's novel *Aberation of Starlight* will appear in a paperback edition, also from Marion Boyars, at the same time.

Portmanteau fiction from Penguin Books includes William Boyd's *A Good Man in Africa*, which won a Whitbread Literary Award in 1981 and evoked comparison with Kingsley Amis and Tom Sharpe.

## Watching and Waiting

Across the screen saxophonists perform a knees-up of strident limbs, but your daughter is too human to see as cruel a view.

Bustly colouring in *The World's Animals* she reduces a majestic giraffe to the homeliness of crazy-paving.

You suspend a pair of cherries over her ear, a dangly two-of-spades, lowest card to the grimmost suit.

She strips one with her teeth and off goes The Sacred Heart bleeding for us all. Promptly ignored with the discovery

of the elephant's useless privilege to beat upon his grey canvas the Impetral of God's finger.

Too soon she will no longer see that double bass player at a silly man dancing with a wooden lady but know him,

sole demented mourner drawing at his young wife's polished coffin. Sufficient unto the day is the swordark

(coloured purple) and conducting everything with a paintbrush – to Douanier with his music, and just as fast to sleep.

David Sweetman

## POETRY

# Instinctively inspiring

By Andrew Motion

ROY FULLER:  
*Fellow Mortals*  
An Anthology of Animal Verse  
274pp. Macdonald and Evans. £9.95.  
0 7121 0635 9

Why do we like animals? They are so well known for biting, scratching, gnawing, charging, trespassing, ester-wauling, interrupting, and fouling the footpath that it is sometimes hard to see how their reputation as good companions ever gained any credibility. The ultimate power over them of modern humans is a help, of course, and so is animals' capacity for blind devotion: even the most odious owners can command unwavering adoration from their pets. And in addition, at least since the Romantics, wild life has often been thought to embody inspiring spiritual values. It is not just that birds and beasts exhibit what some people consider an exemplary fidelity to their instincts, but that they can hint at a self-concern and self-fulfilment which is denied to humans. Edward Thomas's "Sedge-Warblers" is about this: the "small brown birds" are described as "wisely berating endlessly / What no man learnt yet, in or out of school."

With the blessing of (and in aid of) the World Wildlife Fund, Roy Fuller has chosen the poems in *Fellow Mortals* at least partly to illustrate the development of these ideas. It is, in spite of its stately title and whimsical, undistinguished illustrations, an excellently edited and well-tempered anthology – and sensibly so, for the wish to take animals seriously does not altogether prevent genuine love or admiration from mingling with a sense of the subjects' lowliness. Hartley Coleridge makes the point well in his poem "To a Cat": "The world would just the same go round / If I were hand and thou wert drowned; / There is one difference, he true, – / Thou dost not know it, and I do." This is substantially the same attitude as one espoused by Hilaire Belloc a hundred years or so later – "The dog is a faithful, intelligent friend, / But his hide is covered with hair" – and the same "mixture of gravity and wag" which has undoubtedly endured into modern times. But Fuller does not give us a chance to appreciate it. He has excluded from his anthology any poet born after 1900, partly because he was "daunted at the prospect of foraging among the work of recent years", partly because "it seemed recent poetry might swamp or blur the poetry of the past", and partly because "qualities such as wit and sophistication, which the moderns are so good at, might distract or divert attention from gentler and more precious features in older poetry".

All anthologists have to make rules for themselves, of course, but these seem needlessly defensive. For one thing, the evidence of *Fellow Mortals* shows that the past is resilient enough to look after itself. For another, the revival of interest in animal poetry during the past twenty-odd years represents a significant addition to the genre. Ted Hughes, pre-eminently, has produced a bestiary in which the Wordsworthian tradition has been radically updated. His is nature poetry with an X-certificate – an aggressive reminder of what he considers to be the deadness of much modern urbanized human life. Apart from anything else, for Fuller to have illustrated the present and connected it with the past would have fulfilled the heart-felt, didactic purpose outlined by the World Wildlife Fund's Director in his Foreword, and persuaded more people to realize that "without animals, without the habitat in which they live and thrive, mankind itself cannot survive".

There is a delicately controlling irony throughout this marvelous poem, but as the bird's false approaches, Cowper's own preoccupations are painfully and transparently obvious: Just then, by adverse fate impressed / A dream disturb'd poor Bully's rest: / To sleep he seem'd to view / A rat, last-dying to the cage. / And, screaming at the sad presage, / Awoke and found it true.

And gave that strength of feeling, great Above all human estimate. The poem is a memorable one, but a milestone, nonetheless, in the history of sentimentality about animals. Wordsworth's gravity seems to have prevented him from realising the implication that the dog survived by eating the master's body.

Much the same sort of po-faced earnestness brightens many Victorian animal poems. But it is impossible not to notice, as *Fellow Mortals* proceeds, that the wish to take animals seriously does not altogether prevent genuine love or admiration from mingling with a sense of the subjects' lowliness. Hartley Coleridge makes the point well in his poem "To a Cat": "The world would just the same go round / If I were hand and thou wert drowned; / There is one difference, he true, – / Thou dost not know it, and I do." This is substantially the same attitude as one espoused by Hilaire Belloc a hundred years or so later – "The dog is a faithful, intelligent friend, / But his hide is covered with hair" – and the same "mixture of gravity and wag" which has undoubtedly endured into modern times. But Fuller does not give us a chance to appreciate it. He has excluded from his anthology any poet born after 1900, partly because he was "daunted at the prospect of foraging among the work of recent years", partly because "it seemed recent poetry might swamp or blur the poetry of the past", and partly because "qualities such as wit and sophistication, which the moderns are so good at, might distract or divert attention from gentler and more precious features in older poetry".

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# The path of the pragmatist

By M. E. Yapp

DAVID HIRST and IRENE BEESON:  
Sadat  
384pp. Faber. £11.50.  
0 571 11690 6

Even in a region noted for its dramatic political figures Anwar Sadat stood out as one of the most remarkable and controversial. Overshadowed before 1970 by his more brilliant Free Officer colleagues, Sadat seemed to be a different man after he became President of Egypt. In a single decade he reversed the socialist orientation of Egyptian economic life, opened up his country's political system, and changed the direction of Egypt's foreign policy. He exchanged the Soviet connection for a link with the United States, and first fought Israel and then made peace with her. To some he was a great statesman; to others including David Hirst and Irene Beeson in this biographical study, he was the arch-traitor, the man who betrayed the Arab cause. Sadat never changed, argue Hirst and Beeson; he was the same unprincipled exhibitionist after 1970 that he was before, and his so-called achievements were a fraud.

Anwar Sadat was born in 1918 in a village in the Nile Delta. Apart from a brief period of notoriety when he was tried for complicity in the murder of an Egyptian politician, Amin Osman, in 1946, he lived in obscurity until he burst upon the political scene in 1952. For the story of this first period of his life we are largely dependent upon his own account, or rather accounts, set out in his two attempts at autobiography, *Revolt on the Nile* (1957) and *In Search of Identity* (1978). Neither of these is a good book, and *Revolt* is downright bad. Hirst and Beeson have a good deal of fun pointing out the discrepancies between the two accounts, such as the fact that Sadat averred his innocence of involvement in the murder of Amin Osman in the first book and admitted his leading role in the affair in the second. Nasser's countenance, unblemished in 1957, had acquired many warts by 1978. Another obvious target is Sadat's irrepressible determination to make the most of his own role in passing events, a habit which certainly justifies the charge of boasting and exaggeration, even if his part in the July 1952 revolution may have been rather less than the authors would concede. And it is also true that Sadat is less than clear about his curious journalistic and business ventures between 1944 and 1950.

Nor was Sadat's career between 1952 and 1970 notably distinguished. He was prominent, but not a leading member of the ruling group in Egypt for most of this time. The episode with which he was principally associated, the Yemen war, was, by common consent, a disaster. Few would have thought of him as an obvious successor to Nasser - until their fall from grace. Amr, Ali Sabri and Zakariyya Mohieddin all seemed more likely claimants to the throne. Sadat's chief distinction was his ability to survive in the shadow of Nasser, even at the cost of being dismissed contemptuously by his patron as a yea-sayer, and it was this circumstance which made him: his apparent view that Nasser died, few predicted a long reign.

From the evidence of his career before 1970 one might conclude that Sadat was a romantic revolutionary with a penchant for violence, an adventurer and an opportunist who had learnt by experience how to moderate his impulsiveness in order to hang on to a small share of power and the privileges which went with it. He seemed neither a clever nor a particularly wise man; by his own account his ideas were treated by his colleagues with contempt and in the foreword to *Revolt on the Nile* Sadat is praised for his virtues rather than for more cerebral qualities.

But, like his performance as President of Egypt from 1970 until 1981, Sadat will be judged as

Hirst and Beeson would doubtless agree. They argue that Sadat owed his popularity in the West to the fact that he made peace with Israel. There are other factors: Sadat's apparent frankness, his political courage, never better illustrated than when, with nothing to gain, he offered hospitality to the Shah of Iran, and his expulsion of his Soviet advisers, all contributed to his favourable image in the West; but substantially his biographers are correct. Similar courage and independence exhibited by Colonel Qadhafi have never done his image much good. Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, the Camp David accords, and the peace treaty with Israel are the principal factors in Sadat's reputation. It would not be unreasonable to contend that his unpopularity with Hirst and Beeson and with most of the Arab world was due to precisely the same factors, and not to his inglorious early career, nor to any defects of character, nor to his failure to solve the intractable internal problems of Egypt on which the authors comment at length.

According to Hirst and Beeson, Sadat first went wrong on October 14, 1973, when it was decided that the Egyptian forces should push on into Sinai from the positions they had secured on the east bank of the Suez Canal. The first consequence of this decision was that the Egyptian armour outran its missile cover and suffered heavily, and the second consequence was that the Egyptians were unable to master the Israeli forces which had crossed the Canal in the Deversoir region. In their treatment of this episode Hirst and Beeson follow the account of General Shazli, the Egyptian Chief of Staff, who blamed Sadat's personal intervention for the error. The truth of the matter is still unclear. Sadat claimed that there was plenty of armour left on the east bank, blamed Shazli for failure to contain the Israeli crossing, and argued that he had the situation fully under control. Mahmoud Riad believed the original plan was to advance immediately into Sinai and criticized the campaign managers for undue caution, rather than excessive ambition. To be planned down on the east bank of the Canal was little better than being held on the west bank, he argued. Whether Sadat was really responsible for the detailed management of the campaign is doubtful.

Sadat's biographers contend that his decision to seek a cease-fire and, subsequently, disengagement was an error. A more judiciously managed campaign, backed by united Arab support, including the use of the oil weapon, and supported by Soviet weapons, might have maintained enough pressure to force a comprehensive peace settlement. Sadat's decision in favour of disengagement led in the break-up of Arab unity and proved to be the first step on the road towards the withdrawal of Egypt from the Arab ranks and the making of a bilateral treaty with Israel which left Syria, the Palestinians, Lebanon and Jordan in a lurch. Between 1973 and the signature of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty on March 26, 1979, there were several opportunities to turn back from this road, but Sadat did not take them, because, Hirst and Beeson claim, he lacked both principle and negotiating skill. Sadat had thrown himself on the charity of the United States only to discover that the workhouse was managed by Israel. Such is the case, against Sadat, argued with vigour in a book intended as a polemic against him, *United States only to discover that the workhouse was managed by Israel*. Such is the case, against Sadat, argued with vigour in a book intended as a polemic against him, *United States only to discover that the workhouse was managed by Israel*. Such is the case, against Sadat, argued with vigour in a book intended as a polemic against him, *United States only to discover that the workhouse was managed by Israel*.

The most obvious criticism of

Hirst and Beeson's study is that they overrate the unity and power of the Arabs. Time and again events have demonstrated that although the Palestinian cause is a powerful Arab cause it is not strong enough to prevail against the fundamental differences of interest which separate the Arab states. Leaving aside the question of who was responsible for Egypt's failure to gain a decisive victory in October 1973, it is not to see that the continuation of the military conflict could have brought greater benefits to Egypt and Syria than did disengagement. Sadat judged that, even with Soviet help, the Arabs could not defeat Israel so long as the United States supported her. The oil weapon could not be relied upon to alter that situation, for its use took as great a toll of the Arab countries as it did of the United States. Nor were the Arab states prepared to offer sufficient cash to satisfy Egypt's internal demands.

Kissinger's step-by-step diplomacy of 1973-75 could still be represented as leading towards a comprehensive settlement. By 1975, however, it had run its course and opinion had moved back to favour a comprehensive settlement negotiated through the Geneva conference. The Soviet-American declaration of October 1, 1977, appeared to indicate general agreement on that course. The movement towards Geneva was frustrated by Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November and in this book, as in every other, that strange episode remains a mystery. When Sadat made his celebrated reference to going anywhere in search of peace, even to the Knesset, it seemed no more than a typical piece of political rhetoric and was received in that sense by his

hearers, who included Yassir Arafat. Sadat subsequently claimed that he had been meditating the initiative for two months, but since he had never spoken to anyone about the matter there seems to be no way of proving that his claim was correct. It seems equally possible that his words were unpremeditated but that when they were taken seriously he decided that the notion was an inspiration and that a visit to Jerusalem could achieve a psychological breakthrough. Certainly he does not seem to have intended the visit as an alternative to the forthcoming Geneva conference, but rather as a preliminary to that meeting. To the Israelis, who had always disliked the prospect of Geneva, the Jerusalem proposal appeared as the alternative which it proved to be. The world adjusted itself to the new situation: the United States hopped on the bandwagon, abandoning a disconsolate Soviet Union; and the Arab world was well and truly split.

Three explanations of Sadat's most dramatic action may be offered. First, through ignorance, he bungled the business and was subsequently carried along by events which he did not understand but which he sought to exploit. Hirst and Beeson incline to this theory, mixed with the second, which is that Sadat's action was deliberate and represented a considered preference for Egyptian national interests over Arab nationalism. They remark that Sadat's action was especially popular in Egypt and consequently charge him with populism, although it seems hard to blame statesmen for trying to give people what they want. But, of course, Hirst and Beeson believe that Sadat's true people were the Arabs and it is their romantic, uncritical

## An extension of Europe

By C. H. Dodd

WILLIAM HALE:  
The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey  
279pp. Croom Helm. £13.50.  
0 7099 0014 7

The state of Turkey has always been a matter of concern for Europe, and such is abundantly the case today. Turkey is an outpost of Nato in a perpetually fermenting Middle East and a notable, if intermittent, example of a country which has successfully introduced a liberal and democratic political system. But above all, perhaps, Turkey's fortunes are vital to Europe because she has signified a firm intention of becoming a full member of the European Community. For Turkey - and for Europe - this is a road strewn with hazards, among which the economic ones loom largest at present. A book like William Hale's, which provides a comprehensive account of Turkey's recent economic history, is therefore very welcome, especially when, as in this case, the treatment is not, as is so often the case, neglectful of the economic aspects. Indeed it is both unusual and refreshing to find a book on economic history written by expressing the view that the most serious economic problem is, at heart, political, and will remain so for many years to come.

Hale begins the modest intention of outlining the evolution of policy and the course of Turkey's economic development since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. One reason for interest in this earlier period is that planned economic development has been a Turkish concern for fifty years - long before schemes of economic development were put to the test in other developing countries. Moreover, since 1945 economic planning has been attempted in, at least, politicized and democratic or, at least, politicized, environment with all the political

pressures which that implies. Yet despite the enthusiastic promotion of nationalized industries in the 1930s by the bright new Atatürkist state, aided by Soviet experts, and despite the Ankara-style entrepreneurialism of the 1950s (with rather more measured development thereafter), the economic field is apparently still, as it ever was for the Turks, a veritable slough of despond.

Hale provides some reasons for Turkey's economic troubles beyond the more popular psychological or cultural ones, but first he points out that dire though Turkey's economic plight may be, her annual growth rate since Atatürk's time has hardly ever fallen below six per cent - and this against the background of a population that has grown three-fold since 1927 to reach 45 millions in 1980. This growth was not accompanied by the immiseration of the proletariat - the real wages of the Turkish worker rose steadily up until 1977. Where Turkey has gone wrong is in clinging too hard to industrialization at the expense of agriculture, and particularly in failing to tackle the problem of the notoriously inefficient national enterprises set up in the 1930s as a practical means of furthering economic development. These enterprises have often been used to provide livings for those whom fortune has deprived of any political future, but who do not always possess the requisite industrial or commercial skills. But apart from the continuing effects of historical legacies of this sort, Turkey's economic problems since 1973 rise in the piles of oil, with which the confused and harassed governments of the succeeding years could not cope. Although there are shortcomings in a number of areas (like the development of tourism), it is the cost of energy which is the main problem - a problem eased neither by the number of oil-burning electricity generators in a country which abounds in lignite supplies, nor by the neglect of the railway system in favour of building roads.

From consideration of these and other factors, the reader can understand why Turkey has now to be massively financed from abroad. Yet simply to explain the country's present predicament is not Hale's aim. Instead, he covers its economic history comprehensively, entering fully into the period he describes. After an introduction on Turkey's natural and human resources, there is a substantial section on economic development between 1923 and 1960, though the bulk of the study concentrates on the period from 1960 to 1980. For this latter period we are provided with informative and thorough analyses of national income, planning, savings and investment, monetary and fiscal policy, labour and social policies, and foreign trade and external economic relations, including those with the European Community. Specific sectors of the economy are also examined. Most of the analysis rests on primary sources, but a wide range of secondary sources not readily accessible to those without Turkish have also been used. The story is enlivened by the judicious use of international comparisons, which often show that Turkey is not so singular in her economic misfortunes as many Turks believe.

Hale's book is both thorough and well-balanced. It has the added merit of examining Turkey's economic history against the background of the author's extensive knowledge of Turkish politics. His study does not rise to the level of a political analysis of economic decision-making, yet to the interstices of the economic arguments the political often intrudes as the reason why this or that policy was or was not followed - as in the case of land reform.

A major problem for Turkey, as for, say, India, is whether it is possible to combine economic development with some measure of liberal democracy. Must the political pressures always be so great in a developing country that manifestly sensible policies cannot be consistently followed? Dr Hale does not directly address himself to this vital and difficult question, but provides ample material for others who might wish to do so.

## An aristocrat among the Goths

By R. A. Markus

MARGARET GIBSON (Editor):  
Boethius  
His Life, Thought and Influence  
451pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £25.  
0 631 11141 7  
HENRY CHADWICK:  
Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology and Philosophy  
313pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £18.  
0 19 826447 X

It seems peculiarly appropriate that the founder of a great Oxford bookselling and publishing house should choose, for the celebration of his own nineteenth birthday, to mark the fifteenth century (give or take a year or two) of the birth of Boethius. If academic booksellers and publishers need a patron saint, one is ready to hand in the figure of the distinguished scholar whose interests spanned almost the whole range of academic disciplines of his day and whose own creative labours were intended to bring into a unified synthesis the intellectual achievement of ancient science and philosophy. It was a happy inspiration of Sir Basil Blackwell's to choose so fitting a companion for his birthday festivities; and the result is a fine and beautifully produced book worthy of the double celebration.

Most of Margaret Gibson's volume is concerned with the influence of Boethius on medieval thought and letters: an influence unrivalled in the mathematical sciences, music and astronomy, and only slowly and partially eclipsed in logic. As Alison White remarks of Boethius's *De Arithmetica* and *De Musica*, their fate was to become set texts (the latter still used in seventeenth-century Oxford); and "to prescribe a text is sometimes to sound its death-knell". Boethius's scientific works became the victims of their own popularity and were supplanted by summaries, simplified analyses and commentaries. These essays, especially in Part II of the book, give between them an impressive account of the intellectual life which Boethius's writings nourished and the intellectual energies they helped to release and to shape for several centuries following the Carolingian revival of learning. Dr

Gibson's own contribution provides a fine example of the way in which manuscripts of Boethius's theological treatises by no means the most influential of his writings, of glosses and commentaries on them, can cast light on the academic interests of students at Erlangen, Cracow and Vienna as late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; and the seams, we are told, are still far from exhausted: "Something remains for the student armed with basic palaeography and a railway timetable."

Studies of the influence of Boethius's works and their transmission predominate, rightly, in this collection. Several essays, however, are devoted to facets of particular works and indeed to Boethius's life and times. Among these Anna Crabbe's essay on "Literary design in the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*" is notable for the illuminating comparison it draws between his model and his challenge: Augustine's *Confessions*. In his autobiography Augustine had charted the course of his conversion to God, in language charged with the intimacy of personal relationship; Boethius's religion was cast in an altogether more intellectual and abstract mould. What touched him most deeply at the end of his life, when he was writing his crowning work, was "the loss of the ability to perceive the true order and proportion of Creation". John Matthews in relation to Boethius's position in relation to the Ostrogothic court of King Theoderic, and Helen Kirby with literary milieu. A magisterial introduction to the volume by Henry Chadwick conceals the range of learning and research which lies behind almost every sentence. In twelve astonishing pages we are given a convincing sketch for a portrait of the man and his thought, and even pointers to his permanent importance.

These twelve pages are, of course, distilled from the long-sustained labour of research and reflection which has gone into the making of Professor Chadwick's own book on Boethius. The author's characteristically light touch, urbanity and determined clearness conceal much of the twisting and often thorny path which he must have travelled to reach his goal. By way of example, let the reader turn to page 92, chosen almost at random, where he

will find hints of the extraordinary ease with which the author moves about in the whole of classical literature, philosophy and Christian theology, from Plato to Boethius's own day, and, indeed, as appears elsewhere, well beyond. This ease and his knowledge of the most recondite of technical writings, for instance on Peripatetic logic, enable Chadwick to catch resonances in Boethius's work, to identify sources and to note parallels and contrasts which would remain opaque to most scholars. But this is not all: Chadwick manages to find, among the austere abstractions of Boethius's treatise on music, and to include in his richly but lightly learned commentary on it, distinctly sharp comment by Boethius on the political circumstances of the moment.

The political circumstances of Theoderic's reign (493-526) are the backdrop of Chadwick's biography, with which the book opens. Boethius belonged to a circle of Roman aristocrats fierce in their devotion to the Roman past as they saw it, and equally fierce in their loyalty to Catholic orthodoxy. By now they had come to combine, in a way which would have shocked some of their ancestors, zealous adherence to Christianity with love of their classical past: a fusion which made it all the harder for them to accept the rule of a heretical barbarian. To some of them, including Boethius and his father-in-law and mentor, Symmachus, the regime of an Arian Gothic King - even though he had been civilized by a Roman education, was favourably disposed towards his Roman subjects and intent upon preserving continuity in the administration, life-style and culture of Italian Romans - "could not but cause pain". Symmachus, Boethius and a few others of the Roman aristocracy were never fully reconciled to Odothar, the last Roman collaborator, at the best, they were, however, a minority, isolated even within their own class.

Though politically isolated, especially in the last and acutely strained years of Theoderic's reign, Symmachus and his friends nevertheless enjoyed unrivalled prestige. The regime tried to win them over, and honoured members of their families with high office. Though they had no monopoly of education, and although Boethius stands alone, on any reckoning, in his intellectual stature, they were among the last and acutely strained years of Theoderic's reign, Symmachus and his friends nevertheless enjoyed unrivalled prestige. The regime tried to win them over, and honoured members of their families with high office. Though they had no monopoly of education, and although Boethius stands alone, on any reckoning, in his intellectual stature, they were among

between the total scepticism of Polydore and the total credulity of Priscus. Let still John Davies stood up for Geoffrey, even against the formidable Camden.

Sir John Stradling, too heir of Sir Edward, was a tolerable Latin versifier. Dr Davies quotes a hexameter description of the family seat, which, as he says, is a passable specimen of its kind. More notable is Sir John's epigram on Machiavelli's *Prince*:  
principis ingenuum praecipit imbutus  
mundi hulus princeps' to prius  
imbutus.

But by far the most celebrated Welsh author of the time was John Owen, of Plas Du, Llangrannog, or Pwllheli, a Wykehamist and Fellow of New College, who as Dr Davies says was far better known on the Continent in his own lifetime than his contemporary William Shakespeare. Owen wrote about 1,500 Latin epigrams in the manner of Martial, even attaining the distinction of being put on the Index; the Church did not relish such touches at his reference, based on Acts 8, to the practices of stonemasonry.

An *Annals* of Wales, and *Welsh Annals*, as *Welsh Annals* were called, were the last of Owen's works. It is hard nowadays to understand the reasons for Owen's immense popularity, which was especially great in the seventeenth century. Germany, where Johann Peter Titz rendered a hundred of his epigrams into Latin, was especially fond of them. Dr Davies's little book survives some interesting and unusual information: it is beautifully printed and elegantly written, and one does not need to be a patriotic Welshman descended from Brutus to consider it a bargain.

the educated élite who knew Greek well, kept their contacts with Constantine and their fingers on the pulse of Greek intellectual life.

It is the outstanding achievement of Chadwick's biography to allow us to see Boethius's career and his thought as a unified whole. Political and theological alignments were never, perhaps, more closely intertwined than in his lifetime. During the long-drawn-out conflicts among the clergy, the aristocracy and the people of Rome over the papacy (498-506), conflicts which had their roots in, among other things, doctrinal differences between the Western Church and the court at Constantinople, the Gothic king could not fail to become involved in the struggles in the City. Many prominent Romans were looking for possibilities of reconciliation with the Eastern Churches.

Boethius made his own contribution to the debate of these years. In a fine analysis of his fifth theological tractate Chadwick shows him taking an active part, characteristically a highly intellectual one, in the "ecumenical dialogue" of his day. His attitude of philosophical detachment, Chadwick writes, "conceals the degree of his engagement with the issues. He is convinced that a number of divisive problems in ecclesiastical communion are created simply by a fog of linguistic confusion. Among logicians he is one of that rare species who hopes, by drawing distinctions and looking for clear classifications, to reconcile rather than separate." His commitment to Christian orthodoxy, proclaimed with logical simplicity in the fourth (but chronologically probably the first) theological treatise, whose authenticity, sometimes doubted, Chadwick has defended convincingly - his lively interests in logic, in Greek thought and in reconciliation with the Greek Church, drew from Boethius's pen what is his most original work. It was not without its bearings on Italian politics, or on his own tragic future.

After the reconciliation between Western and Eastern Churches in 519, the religious sympathies of many of the Roman nobility exposed them to suspicion at the Gothic court. A man isolated among them as Boethius had become was especially vulnerable. The Gothic king felt threatened, his regime being made unstable through the new rapprochement between the emperor, now again a Catholic, the pope and some of the Roman aristocracy. Moreover, as Chadwick argues in a fascinating section at the end of Chapter One, imperial policy required a sacrificial victim at the Gothic king's hands in order to undermine Italian Catholic loyalties to him. Intricate intelligence at Constantinople and inactivity at Ravenna made Boethius too exposed; found guilty of treason, he was executed, probably in 525.

But not before he had time in prison in Pavia to complete his greatest, though by no means the most original, of his works, the *Consolation of Philosophy*. Chadwick's last chapter, devoted to this work, is relatively brief. It can afford to be, and not only because,

as the author says, he could rely on good modern commentaries: the key ideas which have gone into its making have, in fact, for the most part, been discussed in the earlier chapters. The *Consolation* stands in intimate and direct continuity with the whole of Boethius's thought. Reading Chadwick's analyses, careful, detailed and learned, of Boethius's writings on Music and Arithmetic, of the translations and commentaries and the logical treatises, and of the theological treatises, we are constantly reminded of the homogeneity of Boethius's intellectual career. Elements are gradually built up which find their grand synthesis in his final meditation on the mysteries of evil, freedom and providence.

From its start Boethius's programme had been conceived in terms of the construction of an intellectual synthesis which would complete the deficiencies of Latin culture, predominantly literary and rhetorical in its emphasis, by the science and philosophy of Greek thinkers, now threatened by oblivion. His whole literary and educational programme reflects the assumptions of the late Platonic schools of Athens and Alexandria. The preparatory disciplines are essential stages of the completed metaphysical vision. Logic was an indispensable tool; we have noted one outcome of the intense seriousness with which Boethius regarded it, in the short theological treatise which was his one original work, contributed to the Christological debate of his day. The sciences (not arts, as Chadwick rightly insists) of music and arithmetic, too, were preparatory: they are "footstools of a messiah whose summit is in heaven".

That work of astonishing power and austere beauty, the *Consolation of Philosophy*, thus emerges from Chadwick's pages as the final knotting together of the main threads of Boethius's intellectual life. Boethius was now separated from his beloved and well-stocked library but, apparently, able to draw on his extensive reading with a remarkable readiness. The chapter devoted to this climax of his work is a compelling assessment of the work as a whole. The *Consolation* is not the work of a crypto-pagan, or of a Christian who, at the bitter end of his life, has seen his faith collapse; or is it the work of a Christian wishing to dress up his Christian belief in Platonic guise. Though profoundly religious, it is not specifically Christian (though Chadwick finds some tantalizing hints which suggest that Boethius was writing consciously as a Christian: see page 237). It is the work of a man who had long ago come to see reason and revelation as two separate sources of truth. It rounds off and gives artistically the most satisfying expression to the vision implicit in the dry, often abstruse and rigorous intellectual quest of the scientific and philosophical writings.

Professor Chadwick has given us not only the first complete intellectual portrait, and a wholly convincing one; he has also allowed its subject to emerge from his pages enhanced in stature, in interest and importance.

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## commentary

## Cinderella in the drawing-room

By April FitzLyon

Cendrillon  
Cottesloe Theatre

Pauline Viardot's son opera *Cendrillon*, given a single performance on December 22 by the Intermezzo Ensemble, was more of a Christmas treat for parents than for any but the most sophisticated children; but the children survived - it only lasted an hour - and the parents were enchanted by this elegant and witty musical trifle.

At a Victorian Christmas party the dressing-up box is brought out, and the whole family plays the story of Cinderella - a little opera within a play; there is no more to it than that. The libretto (by the composer) is a model of its kind: succinct, spare and fast-moving. The music is highly professional, very *fin de siècle* French, with a touch of Massenet and an occasional glint of Offenbach. Each number is a mild and melodious send-up of some operatic convention: the ballad, the coloratura aria, the love duet; and there is even a sextet and a mini ballet. Robert Carsen and Peter Evans created a swift-moving and visually attractive production; Maureen Lako was the accomplished pianist; and Christine Collier was a touching and credible Cendrillon.

The singing, it must be admitted, left much to be desired. Pauline Viardot was the most perfectionist of singers and the most exacting of teachers, and demanded a very high standard from her pupils, for whom *Cendrillon* was written. The father's aria, a real hit tune which stopped the show when it was performed by Opera Rara at Hildesheim Hall some years ago, was muffed and made no effect at the Cottesloe Theatre; and there were other imperfections. But the Royal Opera

House could learn something from this company's clear French pronunciation. It was almost impossible to guess what language was used for Covent Garden's recent production of *Alceste*, but the words of *Cendrillon* came over quite clearly.

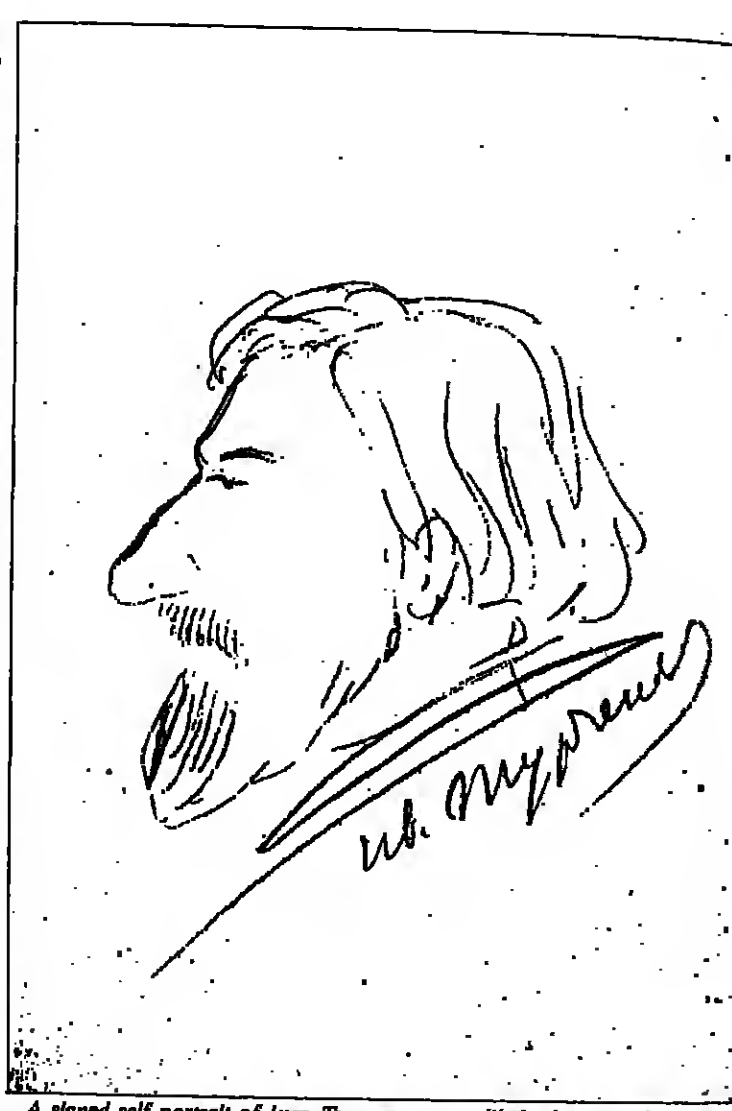
The programme notes stated that Pauline Viardot was the first Dalia in Saint-Saëns's opera. Although she had many first performances to her credit, this was not one of them. It is true that Saint-Saëns wrote the work with her in mind; but she was fifty-six when the opera was finally produced in 1877, and she never performed it on the stage.

In her youth she had been a great interpreter of Rossini's *La cenerentola*; she played it, said Gauthier, with a freshness and naïveté which would have satisfied Perrault himself. In 1904, when she wanted to create a small work for her pupils, she went back to Perrault, and created something essentially French: a fairy story told to the grown-ups with the seeming simplicity of, say, Francis Jammes. In 1904, Pauline was eighty-four and going blind. *Cendrillon* was not her *Folsieff*; most of the music had been composed over thirty years earlier for *Le dernier sorcier* (1869), one of the operettes she wrote in Baden-Baden to Turgenev's libretto. In 1869 the music was right up to date, reflecting - no doubt unconsciously - the spirit of the Second Empire which she so much deplored. By 1904 it had already become something of a period piece.

Like all the Garcia family, Pauline had composed intermittently since her earliest youth; and she was no dilettante, having studied composition with Beethoven's friend Anton Reicha at the Conservatoire. When she retired from the stage Turgenev encouraged her to take up composition again; they wrote several operettes together. These were originally conceived as drawing-room entertainments for students and the Viardot children to perform. Turgenev

himself took part in non-singing roles - it was all good family fun. But, through Liszt and other influential friends, a few professional performances of *Le dernier sorcier* were given at Weimar and Karlsruhe. Although friends such as Clara Schumann were flattering, the operette did not transfer happily from the drawing-room to the theatre, and the libretto, in particular, came in for harsh criticism. The writing of libretto is a very special art; although Turgenev was a great novelist and infatuated with a prima donna, these assets proved insufficient. When, in 1971, the Metropolitan Opera Studio considered performing *Le dernier sorcier* at the Newport (Rhode Island) Festival, the directors found the libretto "totally devoid of either life, charm or dramatic interest". They put on *Cendrillon* instead. One can only be thankful that the operatic collaboration between Turgenev and Brahms - of all people - aborted; a sketch for that libretto was recently sold at Sotheby's.

It is unlikely now that Pauline Viardot's other operettes will ever be revived, for they, too, suffer from Turgenev's libretto; but some of her other compositions might be worthy of performers' attention, and should gladden feminist hearts - the list of female composers of the past is short. Among Pauline Viardot's works there are many songs to words by well-known French, German and Russian poets; many arrangements of Spanish and other folk-songs; vocal transcriptions of some of Chopin's mazurkas, which delighted Chopin himself; and a few works for piano and for small instrumental ensembles. And, while we are about it, what about her sister La-Mallbranc's songs, praised by Berlioz, Schumann and Debussy? These, like *Cendrillon*, look deceptively simple, but performers should beware. When the Garcia sisters sang them to universal acclaim, what really counted was the singers, not the songs.



A signed self-portrait of Ivan Turgenev, most likely drawn in Paris in the late 1870s. From the private papers of Baron Horace de Gunzburg. Turgenev's collaborations with Pauline Viardot are discussed in the review of *Cendrillon* on this page.

## Fifty years on . . .

On December 31, 1931, the TLS carried the following review by S. Gaster of The Gourmat's Almanac by Alan Ross Macdonald, and Ruth Lowinsky's Lovely Food: A Cookery Notebook.

... Mrs Lowinsky is more practical leading up from "cuisine bourgeoise" of rather a high order to the range of a young cook. If they (the manuals and recipes) are read to her and carefully explained, to the "elaborate, costly and exotic specialties given by Loedon's best restaurants which come at the end of the book." The latter are few, and for most households to be regarded with admiration and awe rather than practised: the simpler suggestions are practicable and possible to modest homes. We will take three specimen menus (recipes are given in full for all the dishes suggested).

Menu 1. Chosen to create a favourable impression to a father-in-law, who comes prepared to judge you as either the laziest housekeeper in Europe, or the most extravagant. The evening is crowned by the audience's readiness to oblige with catcalls, hisses, cheers, prompts, calls of "Hullo, Buttons!", groaning, responses to forced puns and gratified recognition of quotations and misquotations.

A noticeboard for "lost quotations" has been set up in the Arts Council's Poetry Library at 9 Long Acre, London WC2. Quotations, preferably of less than ten lines, can be submitted for identification to Jonathan Barker, the Poetry Librarian; and they will be pinned to a noticeboard for a period. Among the quotations currently on display are:

No need of lanterns and in one place lay  
Reclined and droll today and yesterday  
and  
Only our duties bulged  
When most of us have dreamed

which you enter the date of your party, the names of your guests and what you gave them to eat and drink; and if the hostess adds what dress she was wearing on the occasion it may save her much thought the next time the same visitors are present, or apprehension that she may be repeating herself! She has also provided an alphabetical index to her book. In this respect surpassing Mr Macdonald, who only allows us eight blank ruled pages, headed "The Gourmat's Own Index of favoured dishes" each to his own taste. No doubt we should each make our own index to every book we read - there is no better way of mastering its contents - but, alas, life is too short for this counsel of perfection.

Menu 2. Chosen to create a favourable impression to a father-in-law, who comes prepared to judge you as either the laziest housekeeper in Europe, or the most extravagant. The evening is crowned by the audience's readiness to oblige with catcalls, hisses, cheers, prompts, calls of "Hullo, Buttons!", groaning, responses to forced puns and gratified recognition of quotations and misquotations.

Menu 3. It is useful occasionally to have a cold or semi-cold supper, which the cook can prepare before she goes out, and which can be easily served from a lift, with a parliamund. . . . Spinach soup; hering, salad, cutlets in aspic; strawberry shortcake.

Mrs Lowinsky does not confine herself to dinners, but gives some useful hints on garnishes for teas; a page or two on picnics and shooting lunches; and English puddings; and concludes with one piece of good advice which should be taken to heart: by every young couple setting up house, keep a dinner diary, with a separate page for each meal, so

## When constabulary duty's to be done

By Richard Combs

Prince of the City  
Various cinemas

If there weren't so much of *Prince of the City*, if it didn't work over its subject in such exhaustive detail, there would, strangely enough, be less need to explain what it is. If it were pared down to a more standard feature length (as some of its critics have claimed it could and should be), the psychological connections, the moral and ethical dimensions, would emerge more clearly from the chaotic narrative. As it is, it is not merely long (just short of three hours) but apparently shapeless, not only full of a bewildering number of characters but either wilfully vague or coy about the weight that should be attached to any of them. The impression it gives of boundless realistic detail but not much organization has led to glib verdicts.

*Prince of the City* has been praised for exposing a serious problem - police corruption, the involvement of members of an élite New York narcotics squad in the sort of activities that they are supposed to be policing. Equally, it has been faulted for not going far enough into the problem - in particular, for cloaking the actions of its lead character,

based on an actual ex-narcotics detective, in more ambiguity than he deserves. The case against the film was recently argued in these terms in *The Guardian*, which assumed, that it was some kind of realistic document, took it to task for including some but not enough detail about the hero's own perfidy, and then delivered the coup de grâce by deciding that such a shaggy accumulation of detail was not meaningful anyway.

But a case for the film might begin by pointing out that it is precisely its sense of structure and style that is most impressive. What, in fact, makes it extraordinary is the way it treats its subject - the vicious circle that turns narcotics officers into part of the problem they are dealing with - through a fragmented narrative that seems to be pulling apart in a myriad of incidents while surreptitiously building into a precise trap. The hero, Danny Ciello (Treat Williams), a member of a privileged narcotics squad in the NYPD's Special Investigation Unit, is an interesting case history to the extent that he embodies related contradictions - not to the extent that he matches the baseness of his real-life counterpart.

Early in the film, Danny is persuaded, out of no clear-cut motive, to become a witness for a committee investigating police corruption. He lays down the condition that he will not inform on any of his own partners - a condition which leads to his covering up his and their own dubious methods while incriminating

others, and which rebounds on him when the investigation inevitably spirals out of his control and teams of variously zealous, ambitious and publicity-hungry lawyers begin to see him as a target as well as a witness.

Like much else in the film, the silence or confusion over why Danny "turns" is more apparent than real. Towards the end, one of the district attorneys who has been coaxing him through his espionage against his fellow officers testifies at a conclave of government attorneys who are debating whether or not to indict Danny. He supplies what could very well have been the film's key - Danny, he believes, was trying to make up for the thousand daily corruptions of his work in one grand act of expiation - except that the film is not constructed as a puzzle in need of a solution, its multitude of scenes and its proliferation of characters (proliferating both as the investigation widens and as the moral implications of Danny's turning against his own kind increase) comment on and qualify each other but don't build dramatically in the usual way to satisfying explanations.

The characters are enacted quite forcefully, even theatrically (the director Sidney Lumet has a knack for high-octane performances not usually so well contained as here). But their psychology is mainly a matter of flat statements, like the lawyer's comment on Danny's religious sense of guilt. Equally, the

film's ambiguity is not a measure of its evasiveness or hypocrisy, but of its inclusiveness, its sharpness about the moral aspects of the situation. Among its sidelights is the suggestion that the lawyers who originally took Danny's testimony were aware that he was not telling the truth about himself, but suppressed the knowledge while warning him against perjuring himself on the stand) in their eagerness to press their case.

Out of this multi-faceted view of character and circumstances the film draws its complex study of the policeman's problematic lot. The problem for Danny begins as one of loyalty, whether it is something he owes primarily to his partners and the people with whom he deals (in every sense) in the course of his work, or to a system which first offers him a chance to clear his conscience and then turns against him when expiation leads to self-incrimination. Danny angrily expounds his dilemma near the beginning when he rounds on the two attorneys who have approached him to turn informer. That the film does not become an apologia for a kind of rough justice, meted out by the cop who takes from one junkie in order to give to another, is also a tribute to its critical intelligence. What emerges more is a quizzing of the system by which drugs become a law-enforcement problem, which then becomes a different kind of problem. The film's single flaw, in the end, is that it seems too short.

## Christ unheard

By Harold Hobson

Star Over Bethlehem  
BBC Television

*Star Over Bethlehem*, in which the BBC showed us Christmas celebrations from seven countries, might easily have been just a routine piece of ephemeral entertainment. But in actual fact it indirectly raised two questions which historians of theatre have hitherto avoided facing, but which they cannot very much longer ignore. For the narrative was written by Christopher Fry - whose last London play was produced no less than twenty years ago, while the last of the pieces that made him famous, *The Dark is Light Enough*, dates from as long since as 1954. To vast numbers of viewers his name must have been that of a stranger; to others it was the return of a treasure wilfully abandoned a quarter of a century ago. How can we assess the reputation of a man who, with Rattigan, was cruelly abandoned to the

merciless attack of the English Stage Company, supported, as it was, by the voices of many critics (among which mine was one of the most vociferous)?

Fry conceived that the tidings of great joy had been brought to a world that no longer listened. He presents to us a Christ isolated. Two men he nationalizes, played by zithers le front of a coldly floodlit Geneva church; but there was no audience. A group of bleats sang in the hall of an American university; but the hall was empty. With a furrowed brow, and eyes searching vainly upwards, an Arab to Jerusalem sang "The First Nowell" both in Arabic and in English. This was the loveliest thing in the programme, but again the would-be joyous words fell on no ears but those of the singer's small family. For the carol in St Martin-in-the-Fields the church was without a congregation. The great doors were thrown wide open, and as the music flowed out one could see the unheeding motor cars flashing past, the story of Christ unheard, and Christ Himself forgotten. Fry's Christ is not even reviled and rejected; he is just ignored.

Fry and his generation were swept away by the creative and vituperative powers of the English Stage Company. Has what this company swept away been adequately compensated for by what it has craved in its place? At present there is no doubt that the answer would be yes. But perhaps further investigation is called for. I have lately been required to read much of the drama of the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s. The English Stage Company, in its great days, always maintained that the theatre it replaced was one given over to triviality and mere amusement. On this belief it greatly prospered. But this belief is a myth. The theatre of *The Lady's Not for Burning*, *Venus Observed*, and *The Dark is Light Enough* was the theatre of *The Browning Version*, *Marching Song*, *Home Is Tomorrow*, *The Cockat*, *Party*, *The Confidential Clerk*, *Alexander the Great*, and *Saint's Day*. There is not much of French windows and "Who's for the night?" here. The great questions have not yet been coolly settled.

## The analytical line

By Richard Calvocoressi

Käthe Kollwitz 1867-1945  
The Graphic Works

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

The work of Käthe Kollwitz, one of this century's stronger graphic artists, is virtually unknown in Britain; there cannot be many more than a dozen of her prints in public collections. And yet at an exhibition of modern German art held in London in 1938 she was described in the accompanying leaflet as "the greatest woman artist in Germany". Her work has affinities with that of the sculptor Ernst Barlach, three years her junior, and also with the allegorical imagery of Lovis Corinth, her senior by nine years. Looking at her prints one is often reminded too of Munch, of his flowing line and habit of portraying a pair or a group of figures as a single, living organism.

All these artists were greatly indebted to nineteenth-century German Symbolism and were of a slightly older generation than the Expressionists. But in Kollwitz's art the symbolist emphasis on the archetypal and anonymous, as opposed to the individual and local, is tempered by a passionate interest in the world around her. That world was not a pleasant or happy one. At the time of the London exhibition in 1938 her work was proscribed by the Nazis although she was still living in the dismal working-class district of Berlin where her husband, Karl Kollwitz, had been a doctor since their marriage in 1891. Her second son Peter had been killed in action at the beginning of the First World War. Both her husband and grandson were to die during the Second World War, the latter also in action. Kollwitz herself survived until a few days before Germany's collapse in the spring of 1945; she was seventy-seven when she died.

Much of her subject matter is based directly on observation and experience: sick children and women - the latter shown "emaciated" and vulnerable - who greet her husband's patients; her own grief at the death of her son. The image of the mother, gnawing her dead child obsessed Kollwitz and in certain works seems to have

Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, where the exhibition was first shown, is to be congratulated for having assembled this exhibition of over a hundred drawings, lithographs, etchings, woodcuts and posters, and for having commissioned an excellent essay in the catalogue from Käthe Hartley, who discusses the two main strands in Kollwitz's art: its naturalism and its symbolical or quasi-religious content. For the iconography of her two early series of prints, *A Weavers' Uprising* (based on Hauptmann's play *The Weavers*) and *Peasants' War*, Kollwitz turned to the great nineteenth-century French tradition of Realism and especially to the scenes of rural labour given grandeur and monumentality by Millet. Her identification with the struggles of an oppressed proletariat end with the tragic fate of women have encouraged Communist and feminist alike to claim Käthe Kollwitz as their own; but at its best her art refuses to do anything so limiting as to serve a cause. The exhibition is in Edinburgh until January 20. It will be at the ICA, London, from February 13 until March 14. The catalogue (88pp, with 80 black and white illustrations, £2.95, 0 907074 11 1) is available from Kettle's Yard, Northampton Street, Cambridge CB3 0AO.

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## DRAMA

... ..



## Testing the rules

By Geoffrey Strickland

GRAHAM DUNSTAN MARTIN:  
The Architecture of Experience  
A Discussion of the Role of Language and Literature in the Construction of the World  
201pp. Edinburgh University Press. £12.  
0 85224 409 6

It is good that a book like this can still appear in Britain, published by a reputable university press. It draws on and offers its own contribution to specialist studies in the field of linguistics, philosophy, the psychology of perception and memory and the sociology of knowledge. Yet it has no pretensions to specialist expertise. Its virtues are intellectual rather than academic and it resembles in this respect the work of French rather than Anglo-Saxon thinkers; that of Merleau-Ponty, for example, of whose viewpoint and approach one is sometimes reminded, even if he is nowhere mentioned. Graham D. Martin lectures on French literature and his book is partly a defence of the classics of literature written from what he terms of contemporary literary theory. It is clearly a "humanist" point of view (E.M. Forster is a novelist he quotes several times.) Whether one is convinced by the arguments or not, his book can be read as the personal testimony of a

cultured and public-spirited man. It is also a reasoned apology for individual and (though he doesn't use the word) "elitist" values, against the assaults of fashionable academic philistinism.

"What is consciousness?" Martin begins by asking and he defends from the outset the notion of the primacy and irreducibility of individual perception. In sociology, for example, "there is no model save consciousness's paintings of other consciousnesses". Yet social science "is not competent to discuss the individual". (The sociologist who exhibits such expertise presumably forfeits his credentials.) This is the great advantage of literature which, concerned as it is with individual awareness, has a pre-eminent ethical authority: for "the mere fact of individual consciousness... is sufficient to question law and morality." Law and morality belong to the realm of the "abstract", which Martin, who finds truth and meaning only in the possibility of reference back from abstraction to individual experience, likens to the fixed habits of the senses which impede awareness and are self-perpetuating. The fixed categories of worldly knowledge and ethics ore, no doubt, indispensable thought but they need constantly to be questioned and constructed anew; and one of the justifications of literature is precisely its subversive function.

Yet literature promotes awareness

also by drawing on and recasting, in what are sometimes unaccountably powerful and revealing associations, the latent images and feelings from the immeasurable store in the brain. Memories, we are reminded, was the mother of the Muses. Developing an argument from his earlier *Language, Truth and Poetry* and drawing on specialized experimental work, Martin speculates that all our past experiences are arguably, even if not demonstrably, available to memory and that total recall is a real possibility. Total recall itself (like that of Alice's Lullaby's unfortunate patient, afflicted with any verbal association without losing himself in a forest of minute particulars), would be incompatible with the understanding of poetry. It is our own and the poet's ability to select and generalize from particular detailed memories that makes a new combination of associations possible and thereby communication between those whose memories have, inevitably, common features while remaining distinct and unique. The book ends with a defence of the ways in which individuals collaborate in creating meaning and value and with an attack on the kind of moral relativism which, by denying itself the right to judge alien values, makes all values seem equally illusory. This assumption, Martin argues, underlies the egalitarianism of sociologists, educationalists and critics like Michael Young, Brian Jackson and Terry Hawkes.

The main disadvantage of Martin's admirably bold approach to what he sees as matters of the utmost human concern is that he sometimes allows his case to rest on one-sided arguments in what remain matters of genuine debate. His attitude to abstraction, for example, appears to be that of a kind of nominalist, but the objections to nominalism are disregarded. He makes some telling points about the more naïve kind of moral relativism. Must we refuse to condemn, he asks, the continued widespread practice of clitoridectomy throughout the Third World? To include D.Z. Phillips and Peter Winch among the naïve relativists is, however, to ignore the genuine problems which trans-cultural judgments of value entail. There is an objection too which at least needs to be answered to the idea that fiction provides a testing-ground for the applicability of moral law. Not only can

novelists cheat. How can they avoid doing so when they fake all the evidence and deal only in hypothetical cases? Some of Martin's illustrations might be taken, unfortunately, as justifying this objection. He praises Huck Finn, for example, for preferring damnation to the betrayal of nigger Jim and for having the courage to choose love and what is humanly real rather than an impersonal moral code. Yet one of the reasons for which this episode can seem poignant and heroic and not merely an illustration of Martin's somewhat obvious general point (or as a contribution to Twain's anti-Christian polemic) is that to save Jim, Huck has to betray other friends, as well as what he believes to be the Christian law. The moral law with which he wrestles is in fact highly personalized. Some of the nicest people in the novel own slaves.

## Asking the unaskable

By Lachlan Mackinnon

BARBARA JOHNSON:  
The Critical Difference  
146pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £7.25.  
0 8018 2458 3

Troubled by the problem of syntax and what can be said of this "necessary but insufficient condition" for saying anything at all, Barbara Johnson says that she "did what any modern student of poetics would do: I went to see what Mallarmé said about it". She has already offered a reading of Mallarmé's "Le Nénuphar blanc" as pointing to its own indeterminately allegorical status as its true subject, and of Baudelaire's two "Invitations au voyage" (poem and prose-poem) as each "the pre-text of the other", an asymmetrical pair which question each other's exclusiveness by being ambiguously distinct: writing about writing about writing, and stylishly done. Unsurprisingly, she finds Mallarmé helpfully ambivalent about syntax, granting it a power which he systematically subverts into incompatible alternatives. "Mallarmé is to Chomsky as Copernicus is to Ptolemy as Freud is to Descartes, in that the former in each case works out a strategically rigorous decentering of the structure described by the latter, not by abandoning that structure but by multiplying the forces at work in the field of which that structure is a part." Poetry, she decides, shows us that "knowledge is an effect of syntax", that the way we

speak determines what we know - or, rather, "what we do not know we do not know".

As her subtitle makes clear, the author is well aware that she operates within a particular style of thought, one of which she is not uncritical. For example, she shrewdly points out Barthes's simplification of Balzac in *SSZ*, and traces with some care Derrida's misreading of Lacan's reading of Poe. If you want to see what deconstructive criticism looks like, this book is recommended. For subjects are widely chosen (Balzac, Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Apollinaire, Melville, Poe, Barthes, Lacan, Austin, Derrida) but generic, and it is mostly more lucid than many other examples.

However, the last chapter (Poe and company) is a disgrace. The author indulges herself too often in the giggling periphrasis which post-structuralists seem to find entertaining. It is not the exhibitionism of some of its practitioners which has earned deconstruction such a bad name so much as its ending up as a "proper epistemological pudding" (E.T. Thompson's tart phrase about Althusser). What Barbara Johnson concludes in her last chapter is as follows: "If we could be sure of the difference between the determinable and the undeterminable, the undeterminable would be comprehended within the determinable. What is undecidable is whether a thing is decid-able or not." That is, the determinable is comprehended within the undeterminable, the difference between the two is illusory.

It is to this radically pyrrhonian position that deconstruction must proceed, and there would be no quarrel with the logic if it did not depend upon our taking literally those terms which it is intended to explode. This conclusion reached depends upon "undecidable" having a very definite - no, "decidable" - meaning and is therefore inadmissible to its premises (the style seems to be catching). If we begin from the position that writing betrays its own ignorance and has only itself as subject, we have assumed what we are setting out to prove, an entertaining bit of idle diversion, and if we proceed from the position that knowledge is a synthetic effort, we will indeed discover that knowledge is no more than syntactic. The proof of the pudding appears to be in the cooking.

Derrida's work has an honourably frantic air of comedy, where Ms Johnson is in earnest. Derrida knows at least that if the important questions cannot be asked they cannot be said to matter. By collapsing distinctions, deconstruction abolishes the thresome true/false, interesting/boring differences on which it yet depends to be listened to at all. To her sixth chapter, for instance, Barbara Johnson wants to press on to "political conclusions" but, in her own terms, she cannot: you may if you choose, she says, ground away from under your own feet, but you cannot wisely then step forward. This book, Simon raises the questions it manages to raise.

Matt Simpson

## Small-town uncertainties

By Adam Mars-Jones

LOUIS D. RUBIN:  
Surfaces of a Diamond  
209pp. Louisiana State University Press. £7.75.  
0 8071 0897 9

The text of *Surfaces of a Diamond*, a novel describing the summer of 1939 as experienced by a Jewish teenager in South Carolina, arrives with a number of barriers round it. The cover photograph, of an adolescent gazing across sun-splashed water, suggests the most sentimental of memoirs, and a blurb which argues that the book's hero is not "an alienated boy" but "an enthusiastic baseball player", who "enjoys a rapport with the world around him", does nothing to help. Clearly Louis D. Rubin's publishers wish to claim a genre on his behalf (the novel-of-adolescence) without losing readers who might be immune to it.

But title is the author's responsibility, and if *Surfaces of a Diamond* avoids actual cliché (by its refusal of the word *facets*), it is certainly vague and even misleading, since baseball (a sport in which *diamond* is a technical term) intermittently plays a large part in the novel.

Even after the title there is unhelpful material to come: three pages in italics follow, explaining that hindsight is the enemy of fictional authenticity, and that an adult must not overrule the priorities of the child he once was, when he comes to record those early days. These pages, and

the similar passages which begin each of the book's sections, belong in a working notebook, not to the novel itself.

Once the book has explicitly announced its intentions and thereby failed to embody them, it becomes hard to assess in any other terms; and even if the reader can forget its stated ambitions, its sheer tameness as compared with, say, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or *Catcher in the Rye* is damaging enough.

Any intensity in the child's experience has already been damped out; the measured tone has already reconciled and forgiven, and all the tension has drained from events. It doesn't matter that the narrator, Omar Kohn, is an ordinary boy, but he never even seems unique to himself (which is surely unusual). He is prematurely aged in his self-knowledge, and in the modesty of his expectations; no crises await him. Events build, just a little, and life becomes more complicated; but drama remains at a distance. Omar Kohn is unhealthily free of self-obsession, and his deviations from the norm seem hardly substantial, even in small-town America. He dislikes antisemitism, for instance, and the low-mindedness of his friends; but he feels no particular pressure to define himself either as a Jew or as a sexual being. He is still a virgin by book's end, and though a visit to relatives has acquainted him with different ways of being Jewish, he has yet to absorb the new knowledge. In one of the offending explanatory passages, twenty pages from the end of the book, the author writes (about "the protagonist of this story") that "I anticipate that one of

the things he is going to begin to understand is that back in Charleston when he was listening to the Sonata in A Major on his uncle's phonograph, he was also, without knowing it, hearing the *Kol Nidre*", but this is not a convincing way of tying off a narrative thread. It continues to dangle.

Oblique without being subtle, Rubin's story gains nothing from being cast in the first person; Omar Kohn tells us almost nothing about himself. He describes his world, but his position in it is vague rather than problematic; he recounts conversations, but refrains from commenting on his own contributions. Given all this, understatement tends inexorably towards flatness.

A typical result is the sentence "The freighter was riding low in the water, probably laden with Chilean nitrate", in which the mixture of atmospheres and perverse detail creates uncertainty. Will a nitrate consortium enter the Neighborhood Baseball League, or will the freighter sail right out of the book? The latter, as it happens; but many other sentences send mixed signals.

The book as a whole amounts to a small-town Bildungsroman, with a stolid Stephen Dedalus at its centre: the profession of journalism, moreover, has superseded the destiny of the artist-priest. The book's virtues are too limited to make converts, since it refers to experience instead of re-creating it. *Surfaces of a Diamond* is written by a heterosexual American-Jewish academic born in 1926; and the further the reader diverges from this pattern, the less pleasure he is likely to get from it.

## The age of Aquarius

By Alan Brownjohn

RACHEL INGALLS:  
Mrs Calliban  
125pp. Faber. £6.50.  
0 571 11826 7

One of the skilful features of Rachel Ingalls's novel - her first book for seven years - is its capacity to keep the reader storing clues and hints in the memory in case they all have some relevance to a wider plan to be revealed in its final pages. In the event, most of them do not; and the proliferation of loose ends left untied means that one needs an ability to be charmed or intrigued by weird bits of detail which exist purely for their own sake in order to enjoy the novel. *Mrs Calliban* is certainly one of the sort of allegory that appeals to those who want their fictions to work with the efficiency and consistency of an intricate machine, in which everything relates to everything else.

Dorothy and Fred are fully aware that after the accidental death of their only child, and a subsequent miscarriage, their marriage is drifting through insulation towards a break-up. Fred routinely goes off to work, where Dorothy suspects he may be having sex affair. Dorothy (sometimes "Dot") stays at home and begins to hear easy, soothing voices speaking directly to her on her ancient radio as she does the dishes. We are in suburban America, and there is sudden and alarming media coverage of the escape of a sea-creature from an Institute of Oceanographic Research. This is "Aquarius the Mysterious", and all six feet seven of him, walking and talking and consuming the ethics of colour, she offers; enters Dorothy's kitchen, transforming her life by becoming her house-guest (in the guest quarters the preoccupied Fred never visits) and her lover. The monster, who is soon familiarly known as Larry, is a lost and simple-life-force restored to Dorothy, a creature of brutal innocence who gives her a sense of purpose and a new joy in existing.

Larry, unfortunately, ought to bring more symbolic weight and conviction than he does to the action that follows, where perfunctory discussions with Dorothy about nature and nurture, the strange habits of civilized beings, and

rather vague and inconsequential (even dream-like) stories can have more vigour; and is all the time leading to a dénouement in that same bamboo garden, and the revelation of the point which a watchful reader will have guessed for some time.

Several readily identifiable fables lie behind *Mrs Calliban*, supplying it with most of the little power and excitement it possesses as a shot at macabre moral fantasy. But merely blending the ingredients of the frog prince, the beauty and the beast, and Shakespeare's monster from the sea, and stirring them all into a modern setting rendered with scarcely any depth or thoroughness, does not seem enough. Miss Ingalls's prose shows some signs of delicacy and astute organization. Sadly, in this novel it wastes itself in the service of a tale which, long before a predictable conclusion, lapses into the purest banality.

## Spirit and Act

or, The Last Metro

The play rips on, miscellaneous, gaudy, bizarre while the whole earth is footlights but a world message jumps the synapses from god knows what cortical depths.

The song's name is death, octavo drive home information from the left lobe or thesian bunker where the invisible decrees what kind of show goes on

and on and on. Resplendent through fleshy gossamer paint the actor is a standing cock or brassy barrel of jokes but the audience died long ago.

Deep in the earth the director, the Hebrew, ear to an alcholic sweat and thinks while at ground level Catherine's long thigh is getting stroked.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe

## Blundering in

By David Profumo

NICHOLAS BEST:  
Where Were You at Waterloo?  
174pp. Robert Hale. £6.95.  
0 7091 9071 9

Rumoured to be under threat of attack by the neighbouring Santa Monica, the diminutive island of Casuarina in the Indian Ocean has been reinforced with a crack British regiment, the Gobiin Guards. Their rapid translation from the world of Trooping the Colour and Sandhurst snobbery to the perils of uncharted jungle is an unhappy one, attended by administrative inefficiency and ignorant leadership. Nicholas Best relates in excellent comic style the saga of their gradual acclimatization to the bizarre circumstances of colonial duty.

The officer commanding the detachment is a jingoistic simpleton, Major the Earl of Malplaquet, who sees this assignment as a chance to secure a military reputation for himself. Carrying a lock of Wellington's hair, and flying his ancestral standard on a jeep, Malplaquet blunders his way into history at the expense of his worthy subordinates, especially the heroic Sebastian Clinch, the finely observed central figure of the book. It transpires that the Santa Monica threat is a myth, and that the real danger is represented by Warlocks, a band of hairy native

brigands who are engaged in smuggling a massive quantity of the local drug, "gandia", out of the island. Masterminding this operation is Leon Sullivan, a fierce and materialistic Messiah who holds court in the jungle, equipped with a private refrigerator stocked with supplies of a superior whisky and the heads of his recent amatory conquests. In the campaign to outwit Sullivan (whose trademark is to leave denture-points on the buttocks of his decapitated former paramours), Clinch is supported by a motley troupe: his batman is a skinhead named Partridge, the Intelligence Officer, Foxtro, has just failed his History A-level, and manoeuvres are dogged by a filmmaker named Bo Lindström - "He directed a series for the under-fives called *Peterkin Puppet*." "I know it," said Malplaquet.

As a satire on military bigotry and shuffling officialdom, *Where Were You at Waterloo?* is in places as sharp as Waugh, and sometimes better. Nicholas Best is seldom snide, and his neatly conceived plot often reveals judicious glints of severe reality underneath the satirical tissue. Apart from his skill as a storyteller, Best's main strength is that he clearly knows the material from which the narrative is cut; a former soldier himself, he is also personally familiar with the business of Europeans invading Africa. His earlier book *Happy Valley* was a fascinating account of the English presence in Kenya (where Best grew up) and this novel is as shapely and as witty, a work to be relished for its shrewdness and oblique humour.

## School for spy-catchers

By T. J. Binyon

ANTHONY PRICE:  
Soldier, No More  
277pp. Gollancz. £6.95.  
0 575 03028 3

Anthony Price's first novel, *The Labyrinth Makers*, introduced the character who has since become his chief spy-catcher - Dr David Audley of British Intelligence. Later novels furthered Audley's career, brought him to colleagues - Colonel Jack Butler, in particular - friends and enemies. More recently, however, Anthony Price has been chronologically backtracking to fill in some of the gaps in Audley's earlier life. In *The 44 Vintage* we had his introduction to intelligence work; *The Hour of the Donkey* (Price's last book) took us back to 1940 and Dunkirk; Audley's

father was killed, but his schoolmaster survived. A lucky stroke, indeed, for it enables the latter to turn up again in *Soldier No More* with details of his pupil's childhood and youth. We learn, too, more about Audley as Byzantine historian and get one or two major shocks on the way.

Characteristically Anthony Price reveals the information in very oblique fashion. It is 1957, and David Audley is in the military intelligence in Paris, is called back to London and given a new assignment: to wrinkle Audley out of his holiday tower in the Dordogne and re-recruit him into the department. Echoes of Suoz and Hungary reverberate through the novel; interest of one kind is added by three delightful young women, and of another by a hero of Verdun, once the finest trench-mortar man in the French army, who keeps a pugilist arsenal in his stable. Audley typically the plot turns a few double somersaults before the final dénouement.

The author has given himself rather more space than usual in embarking on detail to be cross-hatched to with a finer pen. But the ingenuity is as staggering, and the execution as impeccably neat as ever. Coarse readers, who want a larger dose of action in their ratiocination, will still think *The 44 Vintage* to be the best Price; more thoughtful ones will see that this is as good as anything he has done before.

In *Lord of the Ladies* (171pp. Robert Hale. £6.75. 0 7091 9485 4), Jonathan Dossa deals almost entirely in the love affairs of Lord Byron (whom the blurb describes as "crippled but charming and attractive"), mentioning his poetry as little as possible. We are given a crisp rundown by Byron of his early life; Lady Caroline Lamb offers her account of the poet in under twenty pages. John Cam Hobhouse describes the wedding, and Annabella Milbanke the wedding night. Byron resumes the tale taking in the separation, Claire Clairmont and Teresa Guiccioli leaving a valet Fletcher to deal with Shelley's drowning and the final illness which he ascribes to doctors and excessive dieting ("starved himself he did, he was that feared of putting on weight"). The different narrative voices are barely differentiated and very little of Byron's style, let alone his genius, is conveyed.



# Anti-social atmospheres

By John Naughton

BRUCE A. ACKERMAN and WILLIAM T. HASSLER: *Clean Coal/Dirty Air* 193pp. Yale University Press. 0 300 02628 5

It is a well-known characteristic of complex systems that action taken to remedy a specific local difficulty may eventually give rise to bigger difficulties elsewhere in the system. A logic of feedback and of interaction means that incremental policy-making is quite likely to produce what are sometimes called "counter-intuitive" effects, which may at first be unanticipated and at worst catastrophic.

There are few areas where this is more likely to happen than in legislative attempts to control or regulate environmental pollution. In part this stems from the complexity of natural systems, and from our current level of ignorance about their behaviour. But it also stems in part from the fact that legislative action in this area implies intervention at the intersection of several complex systems, which include not only the biosphere, but also political, administrative and economic systems.

*Clean Coal/Dirty Air* is a study of one attempt at legislative intervention in the realm of environmental pollution, namely the efforts made in the 1970s by the United States Congress to control sulphur emissions from coal-burning power plants. Bruce A. Ackerman and William T. Hassler trace the legislative and political background of this attempt, chronicle and analyse its failure, and point out what lessons can be learnt from the débâcle.

Currently, coal-burning plants generate almost fifty per cent of all the electric power produced in the United States, and the indications are that, in an oil-starved world, this percentage will grow over the next century. Since America has massive reserves of coal, this abundance must once again be a periodic nightmare to which American energy planners are prone. Unfortunately, however, coal-burning plants are also the single most important source of the extremely unpleasant pollutants known as sulphur oxides.

Consequently, it was inevitable that the control of sulphur emissions by coal-fired plants would, sooner or later, find its way on to the American legislative agenda. This happened when Congress passed the Clean Air Amendments of 1970. Ackerman and Hassler focus on two aspects of this legislation which they regard as being, in retrospect, absolutely crucial. The first was that the Amendments contained legislation that made one person responsible for the attainment of their objectives — the Administrator of the (then) fledgling Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The second was that the new legislation not only required the Administrator to set quantitative clean air targets which would "protect the public health", but it also insisted that these targets should be reached by 1977 at the latest.

As coal always contains some sulphur (though the proportion varies greatly from one region to another), there are really only two ways of reducing sulphur emissions from coal-fired plants. The first is physical coal cleaning or "coal washing", which removes the sulphur before the coal is burned. In essence the process involves nothing more sophisticated than a wire screen and a water hose: freshly mined coal is crushed, passed through a screen and hoisted with high-pressure jets so that heavy sulphur-bearing fragments can settle out. This removes most of the sulphur-bearing particles, but cannot, of course, remove the sulphur which is chemically bonded to the coal. Nevertheless, it is possible to achieve considerable gains by adopting this primitive and reliable technology which can amount to the reduction of sulphur from twenty to forty per cent of the sulphur content of the fuel.

The other technology — which in 1970 was available only in embryonic form — is called "flue gas desulphurization" or, more commonly, "scrubbing". As exhaust gases flow up a power plant smokestack, they are exposed to a lime, or limestone, solution that is sprayed in their path. Sulphur dioxide in the gases reacts with the spray and goes into solution and is subsequently extracted in the form of sludge. Although attractive and ingenious in principle, scrubbing is difficult in practice, for it depends on the successful maintenance of a large-scale chemical reaction in a seventy-foot-long test-tube under conditions of varying load and changing weather. And it is also an expensive process.

Because of these facts, and because also of the wide regional differences in levels of air pollution and of sulphur content in locally mined coal which prevail throughout Amer-

ica, pragmatic environmental management would suggest a flexible approach to the sulphur problem, with pollution targets and preferred cleansing technologies varying from region to region. But Ackerman and Hassler maintain that the reverse happened. A uniform national target for sulphur-based pollutants was set, and the EPA developed an obsessive predilection for the expensive, unreliable and unpoliceable scrubbing technology.

The outcome was highly "counter-intuitive". The EPA began forcing utilities to scrub their stack gases at a cost of tens of billions of dollars. The cost would perhaps not be so bad if this vast programme turned out to be effective in reducing sulphur pollution. But Ackerman and Hassler maintain that, in fact, the EPA's efforts will make the overall problem worse rather than better in some of the country's most populous

regions, especially in the eastern States. And they argue that all the environmental gains promised by the EPA could be obtained more cheaply, more quickly and more surely by more intelligent and flexible regulation.

Why this should be so is a long and complicated story, but its essence is that the interaction of American legislative, bureaucratic and economic systems threw up an unlikely alliance between environmentalists and eastern, high-sulphur coal producers which forced Congress and the EPA to become obsessed by the scrubbing process. To summarize it this inevitably makes *Clean Coal/Dirty Air* appear to be an investigation of a conspiracy. But in fact Ackerman and Hassler do not interpret their cautionary tale in this way.

For their main point is that the sulphur-emission saga can be ex-

plained not in terms of the mendacity or stupidity of individuals or of agencies, but in terms of organizational design.

They believe that the problem was largely caused by the creation of a Federal agency which was not firmly based on the use of scientific expertise, nor independent of detailed political and judicial supervision.

Ackerman and Hassler clearly believe that an older "New Deal-type" of agency would have handled the sulphur problem in a more flexible and effective manner. Whether this judgment is correct or merely the product of the legal romanticism of the Yale Law School (in which both authors teach) is hard to say. In the meantime, their fellow-citizens in the eastern United States will just have to learn to live with sulphur dioxide and its noxious chemical consequences.

## Seeing the wood

By Scott Leathart

N. D. G. JAMES: *A History of English Forestry* 339pp. Blackwell. £19.50. 0 631 12495 0

It is easy to imagine the howls of anguish which would reverberate round the country if the present sovereign were to decree that all dogs larger than Jack Russells owned by persons living in the New Forest should be maimed by the drawing of their claws to prevent them chasing the royal deer. But such was the obsession of the Norman kings with hunting that this was one of the many savage laws brought in by them to protect the deer and other "beasts of the chase" from the attentions of their subjects. Consequently upon this prime aim was the necessity to protect the trees amongst which the game dwelt. Thus began a system of forest laws controlling the management of trees — the practice of forestry — which has evolved over the centuries covered by this patiently researched book.

Although in medieval times timber had to meet a great many uses, later met by coal and iron, there was no real shortage. Interference by the weather, such as the Great Gale of 1222 which blew down vast tracts of forest, and the exceptionally severe winters of 1436 and 1542 which made unusually heavy demands upon the fuel-wood supplies, gave occasional cause for concern; and even prompted the authorities to introduce elementary management techniques that made one person responsible for the attainment of their objectives — the Administrator of the (then) fledgling Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The second was that the new legislation not only required the Administrator to set quantitative clean air targets which would "protect the public health", but it also insisted that these targets should be reached by 1977 at the latest.

In the best English tradition, inquiry followed inquiry as to how the shortages of timber might be overcome. Eventually it was deemed imperative to have 100,000 acres of forest under systematic management to produce a constant supply, but surveys found little more than 60,000 acres of suitable forest or land capable of raising it. However, as has often happened in our history, we were saved by the bell: the ironclad ships arrived just in time. At first the Admiralty was reluctant to concede any merit in these novelties but in 1862, during the American Civil War, an ironclad, the Merrimack, took on two wooden ships and sank

them both, their guns being totally ineffective against the Merrimack's armour. The days of wooden ships were numbered and the future shape of forestry transformed.

Although the main concern of the authorities had been the state of the Crown forests and their inability to supply the timber needed, due to over-exploitation and bad management, many private owners, a class which had become increasingly rich as the country prospered, became anxious to improve their properties and were taking a great interest in their woods. New trees, such as larch, spruce and fir, were introduced from Europe and new management techniques, described by John Evelyn in the paper read by him to the new Royal Society in 1662, adopted. For 200 years these landowners prospered by supplying part of the shortfall to timber supply which, lacking of management in the Crown forests had ceased.

It was something of a paradox that the arrival of the ironclads and the consequent lessening of demand upon the oak forests should lead not to their regeneration but to their decay. For the ease with which timber could be imported in these new levitations made its growing unnecessary and thus unprofitable. The woodlands, for the most part, became little more than sporting pre-

serves, with the gamekeeper, not the forester, calling the tune. Yet there were landowners who, despite this discouragement, saw the importance of forestry to the future of the country, and clubbing together in such organizations as the Royal Forestry Society (the forerunner of which falls this year and to which this book is dedicated) sought to manage their woods with prudence, taking advantage of the newly discovered north-west American trees, such as Douglas fir and Sitka spruce, to increase the production of their plantations. So, when the 1914 war cut off the import of the timber vital for working the coal-mines upon which the whole war effort depended, there was a home-grown supply available, albeit at the expense of 450,000 acres felled.

In 1919, in the aftermath of this devastation, the Forestry Commission was born, with the aim to build up the nation's forestry estate and create a reserve of timber to meet future emergencies. This task they had scarcely begun when Hitler struck. Again, private woodlands, nurtured by enthusiastic owners with expertise provided by the Commission and the universities' forestry schools, came to the rescue and 500,000 acres went under the axe.

The past forty years have seen a great increase in private woodlands

managed under agreed practices and thus eligible for grants and tax concessions administered by the Forestry Commission, which has itself greatly expanded its estate. Wide-ranging forest research, an expansion of forestry education, improved marketing arrangements and the establishment of forestry companies and co-operatives have all helped to make our forests much more productive and better able to meet the world timber shortage which many predict is not far off. Coupled with the increase in planting and production there has been a much greater public interest in forestry and in the amenities which it can provide. Forest walks and drives, nature reserves, picnic and camping-sites are just some of the places in the forests which millions of people visit every year. If the stated target of five million acres of managed forest can be reached by 2025 then perhaps we shall see again in Britain something of the forestry tradition, long since lost in our history but never extinguished in the more heavily wooded European countries.

N. D. G. James, a past president of the Royal Forestry Society and a land agent with a special love of forestry for over forty years, has traced the history of his subject with his usual thoroughness and has done English forestry a great service.

## Running into people

By James Hunter

HAMISH BROWN: *Hamish's Greats End Walk* One Man and his Dog on a Hill Route through Britain and Ireland 301pp. Gollancz. £9.95. 0 575 03029 1

Walking the length of Britain is nothing new. Ever since the early 1900s, when the indefatigable Dr Barbara Moore became something of a celebrity as a result of her repeated trips from John O'Groats to Land's End, the task has been accomplished many times. A book as substantial as Hamish Brown's account of his own north-south traverse of the country can be justified only by his having done it differently.

Unlike most marathon walkers, Hamish Brown, a former teacher who now earns his living by writing and lecturing about the outdoor life, avoided roads and, with the exception of a short spell in an aged canoe on the River Forth, stuck to the hills as far as his route lay through the North-West Highlands, the Scottish Southern Uplands, the Pennines and the Welsh mountains — though it also included a diversionary jaunt across the less familiar Wicklow Mountains

and the Macgillycuddy Reeks in the Irish Republic.

Hamish's *Greats End Walk's* daily diary entry format, which tends to overwhelm the reader in a somewhat long succession of virtually identical breakfasts, lunches and suppers, is an unnecessary obstacle to the way of Brown's generally enjoyable style. But one forgives him his monotonously repetitive breakfasts and his endless getting-ups and going-to-beds. His 2,500-mile trek in the company of his Shetland Collie, Storm, has produced some excellent and thoughtful evocations of the British Isles' wilder and more lonely places. That is where Brown is most at home. "My heart's in the Highlands," he writes, and the comparatively small proportion of his book devoted to the Pennines and the English South-West serves to confirm an overall impression that he regards travel in England as simply a necessary penance imposed by the Creator's unfortunate failure to link Scotland directly with Wales.

As long as Brown has a misty Celtic summit to himself and his dog, he is a happy man. It is when he is obliged to mingle with the common variety of holiday hiker and ramblers that he begins to grumble, complain and generally take himself a little bit too seriously. For he suffers from that unpleasant brand of open-air elitism which would bar the hills to all but a select minority. In one part of the otherwise deserted Highlands, he reports, he had the

misfortune to "run into people". Their presence prompted the quite remarkable thought: "The National Trust for Scotland are great sinners in this regard, developing and encouraging people to their mountain properties. There is a lot more of the same. The 'people' quickly turn into 'mobs'. Encountered on the Pennine Way, they are 'massed ranks'. And the very existence of a signposted and well-frequented path through the mountains of Northern England, observes Mr Brown, 'attracts me as all wrong'."

An author is entitled to his opinions. But there is something more than a trifle hypocritical about writing a book with the object of making simultaneously that most of that public should be kept off the mountains which his book describes so well and so enticingly. Of Hamish Brown's affection for the hills there is no doubt. But his gratuitous denigration of so many of the people whom he encountered in the course of his long walk detracts from an otherwise fine travelogue.

The emphasis in Dmitri Kasterine's *England and the English* (144pp, including 35 colour and 50 black and white photographs. World's Work £9.95. 0 437 08050 1) is on people: it includes portraits which range from hedgers, shepherds, country grave-diggers, ditchers, reed cutters and rat-catchers to stockbrokers, page-boys at the Ritz and the sixth-form English class at Radley College.

## Aiming at the truth

By Barry Stroud

STEVEN H. HOLTZMAN and CHRISTOPHER M. LEICH (Editors): *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule* 250pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £12.50. 0 7100 0760 4

It is easy to get the impression that Wittgenstein's work in the last third of his life goes against, and was meant to go against, a great deal of what is now being done in academic philosophy. That impression could be fully articulated and confirmed only by a correct exposition of Wittgenstein's later philosophy and a careful, informed application of its most important insights to recent developments in philosophy. This volume, a series of papers and replies delivered at a conference in Oxford in 1979, concentrates more on the second task than on the first. It is therefore difficult to know to what extent Wittgenstein's actual views are being deployed with precision and force against targets they were meant to attack. On the whole I would say they are not. That in itself is no criticism of the book, except perhaps of its title, since it nevertheless offers us good essays by some of the very best of the middle generation of philosophers in Britain.

Gordon Baker, unlike most of the other contributors, is genuinely concerned with understanding and expounding what Wittgenstein wrote, and in the course of his general survey of the point and intended force of Wittgenstein's remarks about "rule-following" and "going on in the same way" he asserts many sensible and not-widely-recognized truths about the later philosophy. He acknowledges the abstractness and necessary over-simplifications in his paper while, rightly, stressing that Wittgenstein's importance lies in his avoiding to a remarkable degree in his own thought those almost inevitable over-simplifications that lead to philosophical perplexity. The warning is not always heeded in the rest of the volume, and not even always by Baker himself, who ends by launching a largely undocumented broadside on Wittgenstein's behalf against "the whole framework of controversy in the philosophy of language... common to the work of Quine, Davidson, Dummett, Chomsky and generative semanticists". It cannot be said that Baker succeeds in his attack, as Christopher Peacocke points out in his reply. But on the interpretation of Wittgenstein's text, which Peacocke concentrates on, it is not always easy to determine exactly what his criticisms of Baker amount to. When he attributes positive philosophical doctrines or theories to Wittgenstein I think Baker is usually much closer to the truth.

Crispin Wright, after laying out some very general and abstract considerations about the application of expressions, goes on to argue that Wittgenstein's work repudiates the idea that a speaker "implicitly" knows a theory of meaning for the language he speaks. Wittgenstein thereby rejects what, for Wright, is a necessary part of any philosophically interesting theory of meaning. No doubt there is an important truth about Wittgenstein lurking here, but I do not think the two parts of Wright's paper are closely enough linked to bring out the precise source and power of any such Wittgensteinian point. Gareth Evans, in the most detailed and most forceful paper in the volume, tries to explain in respectable observable terms the difference between a speaker who "implicitly" knows a theory of meaning for his language and another who "implicitly" knows another, extensionally equivalent, theory for the same language. The paper is a valuable contribution to current debates in the philosophy of language, but its considerable merits have little to do with the study of Wittgenstein, except that Evans here produces one determinate target for the considerations about rule-following to be directed against, if indeed they were

so intended. No one here takes up Evans' challenge. John McDowell condemns the introduction of a mechanism or state to help explain our understanding or speaking as no more than "an idle intervening step" which can do nothing to "underwrite the confidence of our expectation" that we will continue to respond in the same way as we have in the past, but he does not specifically discuss Evans's appeal to what looks like just such a mechanism or state. It would have been interesting to see that issue raised and faced more squarely.

McDowell's paper is concerned rather with moral philosophy and is characteristically insightful in casting doubt on the idea that the "evaluative" or "attitudinal" part of human life can be understood as something simply tucked up to our experience of neutral, "value-free" facts

about the world. That idea of morality has pervaded recent philosophy, partly because its denial has seemed to lead only to absurdity. McDowell argues that the key to rejecting both of them is the exposure of their shared conception of "the world" seen, as we can never see anything, from no point of view at all. McDowell hopes to achieve this admirable anti-metaphysical goal while nevertheless retaining as coherent the apparently perfectly general question of "how value experience relates to the world". But perhaps that philosophical question itself, and even McDowell's hope to reach "a plausible account of the content of value experience" in general, would also disappear if the conception of a "value-free" world of human experience, intelligible independently of any "evaluative outlook", had been exposed as the illusion McDowell claims it must be.

On the question of interpreting the behaviour of another culture Charles Taylor recommends a view that

## Worlds apart

By Stephan Körner

J. N. FINDLAY: *Kant and the Transcendental Object A Hermeneutic Study* 392pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £17.50. 0 19 82438 2

According to Kant our knowledge of the world, as given in perception and characterized by concepts, is constrained by the way our mind is organized and, consequently, by the structure which it imposes upon what is given to it. Because of these constraints we must, he argues, distinguish between the mind-dependent world of objective experience, which alone is knowable, and the mind-independent world of things-in-themselves, which alone is accessible to perception. It is nevertheless a legitimate topic of philosophical thinking, subject to the requirement of internal logical consistency and of consistency with any principles, if there are such, which, though not principles of logic, are yet necessary and universal. Kant claims not only to have discovered such principles, but also to have exhibited them in their systematic completeness. They include the mathematical principles which describe the spatio-temporal structure of objective experience, and principles, for example, judged the basis of a plurality of causes, to be inconsistent with Kant's theory of objective experience. Since according to this theory the concepts of unity and plurality and their application belong

to the constraints of objective experience. The question whether Kant's noumenal pluralism follows from his account of objective and of moral experience, whether it is merely consistent with it or whether it is inconsistent with it, is well worth examining, not only because the thought-possibility of the world as a somehow ultimately indivisible whole has been defended by some philosophers, theologians and mystics, but also because it has recently been offered by physicists as a solution of certain conceptual difficulties in quantum mechanics.

Findlay's interpretation of Kant's theory of the noumenal world is, however, much more specific and controversial. Findlay follows the noted German Kantian scholar Adickes in interpreting Kant as holding that the noumenal world somehow (extra-temporally and, hence, not after the fashion of common sense or scientific causality) "affects" a subject's experience of objects and that this affection implies a thoroughgoing correlation between the objects as given to perception and characterized by concepts on the one hand and the noumenon on the other. Findlay agrees with Adickes's view and blames Kant for not having made this "metaphysical doctrine" sufficiently clear, and for not acknowledging its origin in the writings of his rationalist predecessors. Indeed, Findlay accuses Kant of a "great deal of brass writing in the *Critique of Pure Reason*", and of making "an exaggerated repudiation of the magnificent metaphysical tradition" in which he grew up and

to the constraints of objective experience. The question whether Kant's noumenal pluralism follows from his account of objective and of moral experience, whether it is merely consistent with it or whether it is inconsistent with it, is well worth examining, not only because the thought-possibility of the world as a somehow ultimately indivisible whole has been defended by some philosophers, theologians and mystics, but also because it has recently been offered by physicists as a solution of certain conceptual difficulties in quantum mechanics.

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"which is always in the background of his thought".

It is not uncommon for those who have undergone a conversion to be particularly forceful in rejecting their earlier views. Findlay has come to reject as serious errors both his former conviction that knowing resembles making and his former conviction that Kant held such a "constructivist" or "idealist" view. Now, the thesis that the self which discerns a certain spatio-temporal and conceptual structure in its objective experience has somehow (extra-temporally) made it, is, like the thesis of the (extra-temporal) affection of this experience by noumena, far from being transparently clear. But Findlay does, I think, go too far, when he sees "moral as well as intellectual error" in any opinions "which assist in the knowledge of making, and hence they tend to destroy the deep respect for existent fact... without which man cannot be decent or courageous". Surely, many kinds of making — e.g. the productions of craftsmen, the work of artists, even the creation of the universe by Leibniz's God — cannot but respect some unmade, prior limitations and need involve neither immorality nor moral weakness. Such polemic exaggerations should not detract from the philosophical and stylistic merits of a valuable work. They might even add to the latter by conjuring up the very human picture of a philosopher whose passionate devotion to what he judges to be an important truth makes him lose his temper with anybody whom he regards as deviating from it.

## Means and ends

By Kathleen Lennon

NEIL COOPER: *The Diversity of Moral Thinking* 303pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £15. 0 19 82442 1

Moral judgments have normative "direction of fit": to accept them is to be committed to trying to make the world the way they say it ought to be. They express our "reflective desires", desires we want ourselves to have and others to share. Such an account of the "logic" of morality is not, of course, new and Neil Cooper concludes from it that what has often been concluded before, namely that moral judgments cannot be true or false, for they are not concerned with attempting to represent the world correctly.

The swiftness of this conclusion has been challenged by many recent writers who argue that the role that our moral beliefs play in the three-

consequence of believing something to be of value is commonly a desire that others should perceive its value and help promote it; it is not clear that a criterion of "rightness" is one which is adopted when deciding on our values.

Mr Cooper concludes the book with an argument for the rationality of altruism for self-interested agents which has a familiar ring. In the form he gives it it derives from the claim that in many ways the human condition is like that of the Prisoner's Dilemma, with certain additions which make a rational solution possible. This requires that we are often in situations together with others, of having ends which can only be achieved if we each give up acting self-interestedly and can rely on others to do the same. If we take advantage of the altruism of others on one occasion by "free-riding" then they will not act cooperatively with us in the future. However, the only conclusion to draw from this is that we should not "free-ride" unless we can do so in secrecy; and this shows the arbitrariness of arguing for altruism purely on grounds of self-interest.



## Quixotic mixtures

By Anne Stevenson

A. L. ROWSE:  
A Life  
Collected Poems  
413pp. Blackwood. £9.95.  
0 85158 141 2

The departmental nature of academia these days creates a curious prejudice against crossing borders between fields of study. Paradoxically, the closer the fields are to each other, the less acceptable seem the leaps over ivory fences. Thus, the publication of a collection of poems by a professor of engineering, say, or of biochemistry, might occasion interest or even sympathy on the part of his literary colleagues. But a man of letters as distinguished as A. L. Rowse must have been aware before the publication of *A Life* that his collected poems would provoke, at the least, a flutter of controversy between himself and the current purveyors of fashionable poetics.

In a short, somewhat challenging preface, Dr Rowse maintains that he wrote poetry for many years before he "dared" to write history. This seems to mean that at an early stage in his career he discovered in himself a passion for recounting the particulars of what he calls his "inner life". Yet that persistent investigative curiosity which occupies for the poetry energy of his historical writing is equally present in his poetry. The public and the private Rowse are inseparable. They both draw inspiration from the same quixotic mixture of curiosity, nostalgia, an unquenchable recollection of things past, moral fervour, strong affections for persons and places, a compulsive pen-

chant for story-telling, and not least, a tendency to sentimentousness and an eager appetite for gossip.

If Rowse were given to professional humility (a moral virtue he is prone to extol in his verse) he might have acknowledged his masters as Wordsworth, Hardy, Housman, Yeats, Auden and a score of others. Certainly Rowse's poems belong to a tradition in which the poet undertakes to write of personal subjects in a way that enables him to reflect on life at large. His work is untouched by contemporary techniques of "confession" (except towards the end when he tends to name-drop among the shades of his departed friends) and it is with a certain dignity that he confronts subjects of love and death that might have offered themselves to the similar, though incomparably finer, technique of Louis MacNeice. Indeed, what is most striking about the body of Rowse's poetry - all 413 pages of it - is a stance which is both modern and traditional, sophisticated and naive, pompous and boyishly tender. The teflon skin and the Cornish school-boy are both present in the same writer, often at the same time, so a reader is constantly divided in response: delighted at descriptive evocations of Cornwall but perplexed by Dr Rowse's habit of making entire poems out of Cornish place-names, tempted to agree with moral generalizations dispensed with the healthy liberality that used to accompany the distinction of school milk, yet infuriated by the tedium of relentless preaching.

The answer to hate is only love: Love only, for we are involved alike in common suffering. No way is there to be gained or held By cherishing this cancer of the mind, eating up space and quietude. Even though that was written during the war and might be excused as

a noble attempt in an amateur, from a celebrated historian who insists on serious poetic status in the twentieth century, it is almost ludicrous. What does Rowse mean to imply, for instance, when he castigates Louis MacNeice for moving "Breast to breast against the gates of Doom"? Does he really insist on his own superiority in the face of MacNeice's desolations?

There is throughout this volume a ring of self-satisfaction which consorts foolishly with repeated concession to better poets than Rowse is - as when he writes of Sylvia Plath:

Her poetry shows very clear  
Drug-haunted, dream-obsessed,  
Swung by every moon and tide.  
Such fine-spun intellectual drift  
He may catch and hold who can:  
Verse so exotic can never speak  
Clearly to the heart of man.

Feminists should have the grace to howl with nihil at such a McGonagallism. Or again, imagine a reasonably perspicacious schoolboy confronted with the concluding lines of "On Being Robbed":

Everywhere I look I see you here,  
Lurking on stairs, in corridors,  
Behind curtains, in bedroom and  
A shadow in the night's alarms.  
O thou and thief, my robber and lover,  
Come forth, take me in your arms!

And yet this same poet is capable of real depths of insight and feeling when he writes (as every English teacher advises) from his closest experience. Dr Rowse's Cornish reminiscences are almost without exception moving, especially poems such as "Invocation for a Cornish House: Summer 1941" in which he recounts his family story in a language of simple and profound compassion:

With Indian religiosity usually come up with a version of vague psychology or an arrogant willingness to dismiss every concept west of the Himalayas. How's a version of the dialogue between Arjuna the Warrior and the Charioteer - God, or Everything - is not so talented, perhaps because it contains a hidden life-drama of Howe's own beliefs and experiences. "Don't demean increasing consciousness. You're only at my feet". There are more noisinesses of that sort, certainly; but there is also a laxness in Howe's metre, as well as too many lines beginning with genitives.

These flaws are absent in his excellent poem "Saint Francis of Assisi On Being Asked to Preach", which has a musical clarity lacking in the rest of a book which, admittedly, given the nature of its themes, is more expository than concerned with lyricism. "Historian in the Pub" renders notions of solitude and privacy with a strange combination of the concrete and the abstract: "I am not the separate painful things on my mind. They are my materials, in the poem ends, a conclusion similar to that of, 'Miss Solomons'; 'Beethoven plus, unforgotten, the Agnus Dei's handed-down border. My brain, which links them, isn't me. I'm its nucleus.' What Howe's defiant strength of mind will produce next is anybody's guess, but it could be considerable if he can rid his work of mannerisms.

Wall is the sort of publication which would not exist were it not for the interest of local Arts Associations in subsidizing local writers and artists. Fascinated by Hadrian's Wall, the artist Noel Connor has enlisted the support of four poets and three other artists. Apart from Roger Garfitt, with his "The Hooded Gods", none of the poets lives up to his or her best standard - the other poets are Rodney Fyfe, whose poems are accompanied by some nasty graphics from Simon McRoyall; Richard Kell, whose work appears with mysterious images from Margaret Ochocki; and Frances Horowitz, whose illustrations are by Paul Smeagroom.

All my father's family were miners. Out there upon the edge of the cliff I see Like a Rhineland castle standing boldly up. The ruined engine-house of Appletree. There my grandfather worked under the sea.

I never knew him. The bad air, they said. Killed him in his forties, leaving nine Sons to be brought up by his stoic wife.

However one might carp at the rhyme scheme (which is of the now-you-see-it, now-you-don't variety) this whole poem carries the authority of genuine emotion, as does a long narrative poem, written much later, which takes the story of the Rashleighs of Daporth to its tragic end. Similarly, Rowse demonstrates that he has a natural gift for lyric in poems like "Winter at Trenarren" and "Evening in Wartime":

Two aircraft return, where went out Over the wood that leads to the sea. The road is white and bare as a bone; I walk along it now alone.

There is much to enjoy in this collection - so much that one tends to deplore the conclusion of one of its final poems, "No Regrets". I've had a wonderful life. All things considered. Coming through stress and strife - Could it be better?

As far as his life is concerned, possibly not. But there is no question that he ought to have lots of regrets about the over-inclusiveness of his *Collected Poems*. Had he gone through them with a stringent blue pencil, A. L. Rowse would have given the world a lovable book without risk of mockery.

Keats's dictum about poetry coming as naturally as leaves to a tree would not apply to Donald Davie. He himself has long ago admitted it ("my mind moves most easily and happily among abstractions, it relates ideas far more readily than it relates experiences") in a passage written in 1957 and reproduced in the notes at the back of his *Collected Poems* of 1970. In some respects this habit of a great limitation in Davie, leading to patches of arid, if formally stylish, verse. In other respects it can actually be an advantage, increasing his scope beyond the immediate to an inclusiveness of vision that is unrivalled in England in the present day. To some extent a poet is the sum of his affections for people, places or things; an affection for ideas leaves a vacuum that must be filled with dramatizations of the intellect. Where there is neither affection nor drama, as in *The Shires*, which is reprinted here to form the bulk of the book, the result is a kind of professional flatness, not without syntactical and metrical interest, but without any vitality of impulse.

However, "Three for Water Music", the title-sequence of poems, has both traces of affection for times and places, and drama in the form of highly coloured, and occasionally sensuous, language. These three meditations on fountains clearly owe something to Eliot's *Four Quartets*. But the temper of the two poets is markedly different, and their themes do not overlap to any great extent; for while Eliot seeks to localize a particularly Christian view of the world, Davie is more concerned with the nature of the creative imagination. The similarity comes more in the organization of the poems; the splitting of each poem into sections that develop facets of the subject, from myth to private life and general statement.

In "This Fountain of Cyane", for instance, we begin with a recounting of Plato's abduction of Proserpine and the transformation of the nymph, Cyane. This is taken out of old-time Pope and twisted with some violent, if grotesque, heroic couplets: Enna's field where Phoebus ne'er lovesides. The tufted fennec, not offends the shades. And her gulfing Ma assumes the land, Conspire divine; cacophonous, gl'n in hand. This is, to use Davie's own words, "Imperious, in bad taste", as is the doggerel of "The Spring-fed pool that is Cyane may". He visited in Sicily today, the shock effect of such technique presumably corresponding to the brutality of the rape. Out of such incoherence, Davie implies in the next section, the moment of vision

may be born, here symbolized by a leaping fish that Demeter launches "in a silver arc / To signalize her daughter's / Re-entry to the dark."

In the third section he deals with the old problem of the relation between artifice and inspiration. In the process he becomes more prosaic (as does Eliot in his reflective passages), achieving a conversational academicism ("So, though one might almost say 'loosa' / One mustn't..."). The Greek / World, one is made to remember, / Was Christianized quite early" though "Some", he warns, "Who missed the flash of a fin / Were keeping their eyes on rhyme-schemes."

The fourth section relates this specifically to himself, and in it he gives the most apt and ironic description of his own poem in a phrase that cleverly characterizes Davie's voice with all its will-power and dry sensuousness:

But when Now, and again I turn the knob and enter  
The special chill where my precocious Springs  
Hang water-beaded in still air, I hear  
A voice announce: "And this is the Conservatory!"

This is an image he could well be hung by, for though the fifth and last section returns to the leaping fish that "might suffuse / Our lives with happiness" one realizes that this is unlikely to happen in the conservatory.

"Wild Boar Clough", the second fountain, brings us back to England and to Davie's non-conformist roots; there is a genuine nostalgia for muscular Christianity and there are echoes of "Little Gidding". The third fountain is Arethusa's, again in Sicily, and reads like a possibly over-extended review of Shelley's poem on the subject. Davie moves on to the difficulty of responding adequately to the earlier "Epiphanies all around us". The god, he says

Awaked in vain indignantly the lunge Of a silver fin in our thinned-out devotions. Flaw in the too late amber of our season.

Our fate is figured in the last section by a "rope-walk" of "Gratitude, Need and Gladness", "Warm, honesties of makeshift."

Like Eliot, Davie makes heavy use of other people's poems; sometimes in quotation marks, sometimes slipped in as part of a phrase of his own; but while Eliot convinced that his borrowings were squeezed out by some emotional pressure, Davie allows his to become an aspect of ironic, professional parlance, the clutter of the academic conservatory. His diction is in many places forced, yet he can write verse that is stumpy and memorable. His gifts are such as have produced "The True Borne Englishman", but his intellect aspires to that of Wordsworth, Shelley or Pound. His poetry arises out of such contradictions. It can challenge and delight without being entirely comfortable in "any" of its moods.

## Fountain-gazing

By George Szirtes

DONALD DAVIE:  
Three for Water-Music  
69pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £2.95.  
85635 363 9

## Turning the black earth

By Henry Gifford

MARINA TSVETAYEVA:  
Selected Poems  
Translated by Elaine Feinstein  
126pp. Oxford University Press.  
£4.95.  
0 19 21894 3

Ten years ago, when the original edition of these translations came out, Elaine Feinstein remarked: "occasionally a translator will suddenly have the sense of writing the poem itself, freshly, as though for the first time." There were other perceptive comments in her introduction, which has been revised and expanded for the present book. But this comment has a special integrity behind the undertaking. When such a transformation (she borrows the term from Octavio Paz) "refused to happen", the poem was scrapped. It had failed, in fact, to become a poem - which is true of too many verse translations put before the public.

Her strictness had its reward. The collection, augmented now by another fourteen poems, catches the thrill of Tsvetayeva, the high tension running through her poetry.

I am no more than an animal that someone has stabbed in the stomach.

Burnish. As if the soul had been torn away with the skin... Those lines on the agony of parting, from *Poem of the End* (1924), expose the pain exactly as Tsvetayeva does, and the blow lunge home with the force of the alliteration - "stabbed in the stomach". Tsvetayeva shocks, but never indulges in violence for its own sake; the note here is keen but controlled; she has intellectual agility, and her mind dances through its suffering. So the translator must not bludgeon our nerves. The English poem has to keep pace with the Russian, and to preserve not only its fierceness but its play.

Angele Livingstone, who supplied literal translations together with expert guidance for most of the poems published in 1971, observes in her "Note on Working Method" - a valuable account reprinted here - that "the English versions are consciously less emphatic". It is a question of what the language will bear. In our own poetry the language of grief is often most effective when most subdued: "The memory of what has been / And never more will be." Tsvetayeva releases the full charge of feeling, always; and the emphasis is shown on the page typographically, with dashes that remind the English-speaking reader of Emily Dickinson, and with exclamation marks. Such vividness is not for us. Emily Dickinson herself would have become strident, were it not for her philologist's lingering upon words. Tsvetayeva moves urgently forward, yet she too has her own discipline. Her poems, that sound so breathless and abrupt, are in fact beautifully organized.

(Mrs Livingstone illustrates this in her "Note.") As Elaine Feinstein puts it, "her pauses and sudden changes of speed were felt always against the deliberate constraint of the forms she had chosen". It is the combination of "her shapeliness, as well as her roughness" that had, so far as possible, to be reproduced.

How deliberately is a matter of discretion. The poem of 1935, "Epitaph", for the young poet Gronsky on whom Tsvetayeva had placed high hopes, has in the Russian a stronger patterning than the English shows. In its opening lyric the last lines of the second stanza appear as the last line in the following stanza: "Where has it gone to, your face?" Tsvetayeva wrote: "Your soul - where has it gone?" "Your face - where has it gone?" Indeed, all four stanzas of this poem end with the two words, "where gone?" - "gone", in origin a past participle, varying its gender and so the form of the final syllable: *ushlo, ušla, ušlo, ušla*. Such diversification in sameness would not be possible in English, but it is suggested through the slight

rearrangement in the latter of the lines quoted.

In the next lyric of this cycle the second stanza was written by Tsvetayeva went, literally:

No, neither of the two: Bone [is] too much bone, spirit too much spirit.

Where [are] you? where that one? where [your] self? where all [of] you? There [is] too much there, here too much here.

The translation copes with this by the repeated device of a "slight shift" through which Elaine Feinstein seeks "to dispel any sense of static solidity, which blocks of lines convey to an English eye...".

Neither one of the two. Bone is too much bone. And spirit is too much spirit. Where is the real you? All of you? Too much here. Too much there. The structure has altered, but the voice comes close to the original.



Tsvetayeva in 1914

One more example, from the last lyric in "Epitaph", will show the liberality that the translator has felt obliged to take, for some equivalence of effect. The Russian poem repeats the image of a blow, "muffled" in the opening words, "muffled" twice more, in the second and fourth of the five stanzas, and at the close bringing the poem round to its sterling point:

By window wadding plugg'd into ears And by that beyond the window, By snow - by yawn - by loud heartiness The blow - muffled...

The translation proceeds flexibly: Window wadding, our ears are plugg'd with it and with that other wool outside windows of snow and the weight of spiritless years: and the blow is muffled.

Nothing has been lost here (though "spiritless" seems wrong) and it is proper for "window wadding" to lead off the first line. What has been forfeited is the emphasis of the repeated grammatical form, in the third line (*zhegimi - godimi - pudimi bezdishi ya*: "By snows - by years - by loads of heartlessness") and the play in this and the following line of the stressed vowels *ya* and *a*, both present in *zhegimi*, "how". Yet it must be admitted that such emphasis would seem overbearing in English.

Tsvetayeva's verse is capable of an extreme economy, in part because it often dispenses with verbs and exploits fully the opportunities of reflected language. In "The Poet" (1923) she asks the question that Mayakovsky (her brother in poetry and her opposite) asked also. What was she to do "with all this immensity in a measured world"? These words conclude the poem, and their lacunae has scarcely been lost in translation. But the preceding stanza ends with a similar six words in Russian: "With their imponderability in a world of wights." In translation, this stretches out to: "[visions:] that cannot be weighed, in a world that deals only in weights and measures?" Here, in diffusion though not slackness, and of course it should be considered as part of the whole stanza, which creates its own rhythm.

The most difficult feature of Tsvetayeva's poetry to convey is her exploration of the self. One new poem here, *Wires* (written to Pasternak in

1923), seizes on the counterpoint of two cognate words, those for "wires" and "send-off". The die is against emulation of this particular word play in English. Another poem to Pasternak, of 1925, on the effects of separation, becomes a litany of verbs all having the prefix *raz-*, which expresses severance. "Distance" is the exact counterpart of Tsvetayeva's initial word, *razstoyaniye*, literally "standing apart", from which the poem draws out ever new implications. (One pair of fourteen verbs she has mobilized is again untranslatable: difference of stress alone distinguishes "to make quarrel" from "to litter".) The poem is newly translated here by Elaine Feinstein, who in succession to "distance" has been able to use *dispersed*, *disconnected*, *dissected*, *discord*, and, exquisitely, *discovered* for the Russian verb meaning "to disorder" and also "to put out of tune". Tsvetayeva herself was not satisfied with the culminating verb: "And we're scattered like some pack of cards", since only two people were involved. She spread it for the effect - a somewhat unusual wrenching of language to her own purposes. Very much more often, like Pasternak, she makes her word play wholly responsible.

Elaine Feinstein is no more arbitrary in her diction. In one of the *Verses About Moscow* (written for Mandelstam in 1916), dawn at the Vaganokovo cemetery becomes "silly" rather than "early", though Tsvetayeva could have approved. Less certain in the same sequence is "burnished fields". The Russian adjective is "swartzy", while "burnished" would seem to imply a glossy brightness. It may be that the translator was thinking of the gleam over a dark ploughed field. Again, in one of the *Poems for Blok* of the same year, "Life sings to me as jeweled bells", but they were "distant" in the original. However, it is true that Blok's name in the first of these poems is compared with, among other things, "a silver bell in the mouth". These are the only small licences I have detected. One or two mistakes have not been "dislodged". The "readers of newspapers" in a poem of 1935 that evokes with the Paris Métro to an effect of nausea, should be a "purulent" rather than a "prurient" sickness, though prurience is implied by their scabscratching; and in *Poem of the Mountain* the "inscribed slab" that "will be changed for tombstones" is properly "the aforesaid slab". As Tsvetayeva explains in a footnote, this is the mountain upon her. One new poem, "Yesterday he still looked in my eyes" (1920), in accountably has "Death" approach "wherever love holds power", when Tsvetayeva wrote "whenever love gives up".

The additional poems not only demonstrate the range of Tsvetayeva. (One is glad to see a few excerpts from *The Rattle*, 1925, her special Pied Piper narrative.) They also show that she confounded what some have thought to be the iron law for Russian poets in exile, whereby separation from homeland and another tongue brings on sterility. "The Desk" (1933-35), celebrating "thirty years of union" with this "most loyal friend", and "Bus" (1934-36), prove her continuing power. In "Homesickness" (1934) she says that it is all the same to her "what human crowd will pass me out... / Into my world". The last phrase attempts to render an apparent collocation of her own, *edimleniye*, the "single" of her emotions. Mandelstam would use a cognate word in "Stanzas" (1935), when he proclaimed: "As one who works his own holding [an *edimleniye*] enters a kolhoz / go into the world." Tsvetayeva and Mandelstam, in spite of this, both remained *edimleniki*, and the land they worked, each of them an outcast, was the genuine black earth of the Russian language. The stain of that earth is traceable in these translations, which must be among the best of this century into English from any literature.

## Through furrowed brows

By Douglas Dunn

CHRISTOPHER HOPE:  
In the Country of the Black Pig  
48pp. London Magazine Editions.  
0 904 388 425

PETER HOWE:  
Origins  
48pp. Chatto and Windus. £3.05.  
0 7011 2573 X

ROGER GARFITT, FRANCES HOROWITZ, RICHARD KELL, RODNEY FYFE:  
Wall  
51pp. Brampton, Cumbria: LYC Press. £2.  
0 9504571 1 6

"He is under pressure", wrote Christopher Hope of the English-speaking white South African, in an introductory note to his first book of poems, *Cape Driver* (1974). "So much so that he has long since ceased to be a part of the world". "At the Country Club" and "In the Middle of Nowhere" in Hope's new collection are particularly effective evocations of the dilemmas of white South Africans. According to Hope, they live in a country where "Roundup has it there are some to rich they allow the air-conditioning to breathe for them and employ servants merely for observation". Within that decadent and vulgar aristocracy, a "personified, larger" is appropriate as "this week's tennis prize".

"At the Country Club" is a disturbing report on a frightened and dislocated life, but "In the Middle of Nowhere" a monologue by one both sad and thick, aware and self-deceived, in the better portrait. Its language is heavier and more mysterious: the impression is of a political surrealism seeping through a sweaty and thoroughly furrowed brow.

Lately they have taken to celebrating the anniversaries of their revolt, chiefly in the summer when the black ground, in the bottom of the heads of the tribes.

So 'how' time is eating, sucking on the pinched glass nipple, a supper of sand.

Equally impressive among Hope's South African poems are "Coming Round", "African Tea Ceremony" and the title poem, "In the Country of the Black Pig". To many of us Hope's country and countrymen will seem not to have "long since ceased to be a part of the world" so much as to be vigorously implicated in its cruellest designs. It is heartening, therefore, to read a poet who can balance conscience and compassion with literary good taste, distributing powerful ironies and pictures with discretion as well as concern. Having lived in England since 1975, Hope has also turned his attention to subjects closer to hand - for instance, a series of public-school poems, "Songs for Masters" and "On Highgate Hill" an observation of funerals. The book ends with a prose poem in sections, "Notes for Atonal Blues", a pretentious title but not a pretentious piece of writing. Again, it is about South Africa: "Official Inquests are the funeral of truth".

Peter Howe's first book is a panoptic, generalized and apparently erudite contemplation of such weighty subjects as the origins of language, religion, and the predicament of mankind. Interestingly enough, in view of a literary climate which can hardly be thought of as well disposed to Howe's endeavours, he appears to have set himself the task of being both cerebral and sentimental. For the most part his methods are colloquial. He can also be funny, as in "Neonatural", a diverting poem which sets out to suggest that delectated, urban, office-hours man has as much violence within him as does a wild beast.

Another poem, "Verbalisation", is derived, at least in part, from Morris Swadesh's *The Origin and Diversification of Language*. As a result, it reads more like an exploitation of book-learning in anthropology than a poem which informs or stimulates mind or feeling. Far more interesting are the eighteen varied sonnets which comprise "Recollections of the Bhagavad Gita". Westerners dealing

with Indian religiosity usually come up with a version of vague psychology or an arrogant willingness to dismiss every concept west of the Himalayas. How's a version of the dialogue between Arjuna the Warrior and the Charioteer - God, or Everything - is not so talented, perhaps because it contains a hidden life-drama of Howe's own beliefs and experiences. "Don't demean increasing consciousness. You're only at my feet". There are more noisinesses of that sort, certainly; but there is also a laxness in Howe's metre, as well as too many lines beginning with genitives.

These flaws are absent in his excellent poem "Saint Francis of Assisi On Being Asked to Preach", which has a musical clarity lacking in the rest of a book which, admittedly, given the nature of its themes, is more expository than concerned with lyricism. "Historian in the Pub" renders notions of solitude and privacy with a strange combination of the concrete and the abstract: "I am not the separate painful things on my mind. They are my materials, in the poem ends, a conclusion similar to that of, 'Miss Solomons'; 'Beethoven plus, unforgotten, the Agnus Dei's handed-down border. My brain, which links them, isn't me. I'm its nucleus.' What Howe's defiant strength of mind will produce next is anybody's guess, but it could be considerable if he can rid his work of mannerisms.

Wall is the sort of publication which would not exist were it not for the interest of local Arts Associations in subsidizing local writers and artists. Fascinated by Hadrian's Wall, the artist Noel Connor has enlisted the support of four poets and three other artists. Apart from Roger Garfitt, with his "The Hooded Gods", none of the poets lives up to his or her best standard - the other poets are Rodney Fyfe, whose poems are accompanied by some nasty graphics from Simon McRoyall; Richard Kell, whose work appears with mysterious images from Margaret Ochocki; and Frances Horowitz, whose illustrations are by Paul Smeagroom.

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